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# THE INDEPENDENT

3,027

MONDAY 1 JULY 1996

WEATHER A lot of cloud, some showers

40p (pt 45p)

In an Islington rose garden, Tony Blair reshapes the future of his party

## Labour leader to crush dissent

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

Tony Blair last night defied criticism of his autocratic style of leadership as he rewrote key sections of the party's draft manifesto on which Labour will fight the general election.

The 10,000-word policy document, being redrafted at home by Mr Blair, will emphasise the message that new Labour has jettisoned past commitments on tax and spending.

The launch on Thursday will focus on law and order, cuts in school class sizes, welfare to work plans, health, and the economy.

Mr Blair last week tore up sections of the 1,156 manifesto and decided to rewrite it himself because it failed to get across his message over the extent to which Labour had changed. It will reinforce his grip on the party, in a separate referendum question.

In another major shift, Labour will signal today it intends to abandon past threats to abolish private beds from the NHS. Instead, Labour will shift the argument towards improving the NHS to make private health care unnecessary. Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokeswoman, will announce plans to release £100m for an extra 100,000 operations on the NHS by cutting the number

of managers in the health service after abolishing the NHS "internal market".

Sources close to the Labour leader dismissed threats of resignation by Scottish and Welsh Labour MPs over his U-turn on devolution, and regarded the criticism of Mr Blair's tough leadership style as a bonus, which could play well with voters in "middle England". He is showing the leadership that John Major lacks, said one senior Labour source.

Mr Blair has calculated that



Weeding out the opposition: Tony Blair works on the Labour manifesto at his London home yesterday

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

of managers in the health service after abolishing the NHS "internal market".

He is showing the leadership that John Major lacks, said one senior Labour source.

Mr Blair has calculated that

the Scottish Labour MPs who

were infuriated by the lack of

consultation will accept the

dramatic shift in policy with a

referendum, and will not resign

the party whip to join the SNP.

But there were strong signs of

a backlash by Scottish Labour

critics last night over Mr Blair's

plan to put the tax-raising pow-

ers of the Scottish Parliament

to the Scottish voters in a sepa-

rate referendum question.

One senior Scottish Labour

MP said there would be a move

to limit the referendum to the

single question of whether or

not the Parliament should be es-

tablished. Tim Davelly, the seni-

or Labour MP who was responsi-

ble for ensuring difficult

questions in the last attempt to give

Scotland devolution, said last

night the Commons should

decide the powers of the Parlia-

ment before the referen-

endum through trade unions. By

stripping it of its policy-making

powers, Mr Blair is determined

to have a stronger grip on pow-

er and his party than any of his

predecessors.

A radical change in the

Tories' strategy for dealing with

Mr Blair will be adopted at a

special political meeting of the

Cabinet today chaired by John

Major. The party's advisers

have warned that its past at-

tempts to claim that Labour has not "changed its spots" are not believed by the voters.

In an attempt to clarify its at-

tack on Mr Blair, the Tories will

adopt a new strategy to warn the

voters that with "new Labour" comes "new dangers" such as

the break-up of the Union with

Scotland and Wales.

But Lord Tebbit, the former

chairman of the Tory party, last

night said Mr Major should

challenge Mr Blair to extend his

commitment to referendums to

European monetary union.

"He has stepped straight into a

trap. You cannot say it is such

a constitutional change that

you have a referendum on de-

volution and then deny it on

things like Maastricht. He has

made Jimmy Goldsmith enor-

mously credible."

Leading article, page 13

Frank Field, page 15

## Fraud Office probes regional grants

CHRIS BLACKHURST  
Business Correspondent

The Government is investigating claims of regional grants to the tune of millions of pounds. The regional grants, totalling £100m, are to encourage industry and investment in a new £100m Regional Development Fund.

Officials from the Department of Trade and Industry are investigating whether grants of over £100m have been awarded to the 10 Industrial Development Boards in the past two years.

Earlier this year, the boards advise

of schemes running into hundreds of millions of pounds.

One grant to the South West Development Board, involving £1m of taxpayers' money to Rom-Data Corporation, is being investigated by the Devon and Cornwall Police and the Serious Fraud Office in an inquiry codenamed Operation Gale.

Rom-Data later collapsed and the DTI cash has not been recovered. A departmental inquiry has already identified serious failings in its handling of the Rom-Data case.

But Rom-Data, the *Independent* has learned, is just one of many cases where close connections existed between in-

dustry and the companies receiving their cash.

The development boards form the central plank in the Government's industrial policy, providing a link between Whitehall and commerce. They oversee several types of financial package and, last year, made recommendations totalling £100m in Regional Assistance grants alone.

The National Audit Office and the influential Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC) are standing by to launch their own inquiries. Robert Sheldon MP, chairman of the committee, has confirmed in a

letter the review of all the

grants over £100m and the Audit Office and PACs' interest.

He wrote: "The Department has now begun a review of all recent Regional Selective As-

sistance cases over £100,000 to

identify further problems or

circumstances similar to those in the Rom-Data case. The Department expects this to be

completed by September."

Indications are, added Mr

Sheldon, that the SFO's in-

quiries should also be com-

pleted by the end of summer".

The PAC chairman described the issues raised as "very disturbing". Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor Gen-

eral, who heads the Audit Of-

fice, wrote: "We will monitor developments closely, and I have asked him to con-

sider how best to bring the matter before the Committee in the Autumn".

Close ties between people sit-

ting on the powerful industrial

boards and companies receiving

Government assistance, go to the

heart of the quango system.

Even before the wider, nation-

wide scrutiny has finished, and ahead of the completion of the

police investigation, the DTI has decided to tighten up its procedures. Consultants to the boards must now agree to

a contract requiring them not to

work for companies for two

years after they last received re-

gional assistance cash. DTI staff

are to receive extra training in

the detection of fraud.

The size of the boards is to be

increased and the rules on the

minimum number of members

required for a meeting to be

strengthened to prevent, as oc-

urred in the South West, decisions

being taken with only five people present.

A DTI spokeswoman said the

new rules, together with a code

of practice, should be issued in

the next two months. Mean-

while, the department is wait-

ing to see if there are other cases

similar to South West.

## CONTENTS

Section 1

BUSINESS . . . . . 17-19

COMMENT . . . . . 13-15

CROSSWORD . . . . . 20

LEADING ARTICLES . . . . . 13

LETTERS . . . . . 13

OBITUARIES . . . . . 16

SCIENCE . . . . . 20

SHARES . . . . . 17

Section 2

ARTS . . . . . 26,27

DO WE NEED? . . . . . 8,25

FAMILY LIFE . . . . . 6,7

LISTINGS . . . . . 28,29

LIVING . . . . . 4,5

NETWORK . . . . . 9-18

TV & RADIO . . . . . 21,22

WEATHER . . . . . 29

27

9 770551 948412

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## news

# New curbs on teacher-trainers

JUDITH JUDD and FRAN ABRAMS

Headteachers will be drafted in to inspect teacher-training colleges after allegations that Her Majesty's Inspectors are too lenient towards progressive teaching methods.

Chris Woodhead, the controversial Chief Inspector of Schools, has infuriated HMI by ordering that reports on primary teacher training should be re-written.

The official explanation offered by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), which Mr Woodhead leads, is that the reports, due to be published in the next fortnight,

must be rewritten because the rules about inspections have changed.

But the 35 HMs who inspect teacher-training colleges told Mr Woodhead at a meeting last week that his decision was a slur on their professional judgement.

Mr Woodhead believes that his office must investigate allegations that the reports present too rosy a picture of teacher-training standards.

Right-wing MPs and traditionalists have long argued that progressive teacher trainers are responsible for trendy teaching methods and low standards in schools. They have also blamed HMs for failing to support

traditional teaching and for not putting enough emphasis on the basics.

Mr Woodhead argues that he must take note of criticisms voiced by new teachers in a study of literacy in three London boroughs; they said that had not been properly prepared to teach reading.

He proposed that primary headteachers should work alongside HMs in the new phase of inspections to ensure that teacher-training colleges and departments are putting enough emphasis on the basics of literacy and numeracy.

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, announced earlier this year that

she intended to compile league tables for teacher-training colleges based on their inspection reports.

About half the 60 primary teacher training colleges and departments have been inspected and a summary of the findings they have made will be published shortly.

Although more than 30 reports have been published so far, only two departments have been identified as failing. All but a handful are likely to be classed as sound, good or very good in training young teachers in literacy and numeracy.

Mrs Shephard—who recently announced a national curriculum for teacher training to

ensure that all teachers are trained how to teach by traditional methods—is expected to go ahead with the league tables despite Mr Woodhead's decision to reinspect colleges and departments.

Not all the colleges and departments would be re-inspected. Ofsted may decide to take a random sample or to re-inspect the worst and best.

A spokesman for Ofsted said there might be further inspections of primary training institutions next year but that this was not because of any dissatisfaction with the first batch. "There will undoubtedly be a return to some of them to look to more depth, particularly at literacy and numeracy. The previous inspections were a broad-brush exercise," he said.

Ted Wragg, professor of education at the University of Exeter, said Ofsted inspectors had found that trainee teachers were already being taught to use the whole-class teaching methods that ministers favour.

"The concern among training institutions will be that the message is that inspectors' judgments are wrong and haven't been severe enough. If this is the equivalent of marking the cards of the inspectors who are being brought in to do the second inspections, then what is the point of sending them in?" he said.

## SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Police yesterday prevented an Orange parade going through a nationalist flashpoint in Belfast. Royal Ulster Constabulary Land Rovers blocked the Ormeau Road bridge where a religious service was staged to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. The Orangemen wanted to parade to the city centre but security officials forced violence if the small gathering was allowed to cross the bridge into the Catholic area.

The demonstration passed off quietly but the Orangemen protested bitterly about the ban—the latest of a number in Belfast involving the Orange Order. Other controversial parades are planned between now and the run-up to the 12 July demonstrations. Last year there was a three-day stand-off between police and Orangemen in Portadown, Co Armagh after the RUC banned the parade from going through a Catholic area.

A nine-year-old boy died yesterday in a house fire after helping to save his family. Sean Evans raised the alarm ensuring that his parents, two brothers and sister escaped before the blaze engulfed their end-of-terrace house in Beechwood, Bidstonhead.

Firefighters said Sean was having breakfast with two other children in the lounge when they heard a noise and discovered the fire in the hallway. He closed the door on the other children to keep the fire at bay and rushed upstairs to alert his parents who were in bed. While the rest of the family escaped, Sean was apparently trapped by a "blow-torch" effect as the fire swept up the stairwell. Sean's parents and the other children, aged between six and eleven, were being treated at Arrowe Park Hospital, Wirral, for smoke inhalation and shock. Police and fire brigade experts were investigating the cause of the fire.

Privatised train companies are still overcharging for tickets, failing to provide the cheapest available fare in up to 87 per cent of cases, according to a new survey. John Swift, the rail regulator, said if the findings proved to be correct he would not rule out the possibility of fines.

The Consumers' Association has repeated a survey carried out six months ago which found that overpricing was running at 90 per cent. The new survey shows the train companies have ignored warnings that they would be fined if they continued to breach the rules, according to a report on BBC TV programme *Panorama*, being screened tonight. The survey involved routes between London and Birmingham, Exeter and Bristol, and found that out of 116 ticket inquiries, 101 responses were incorrect and overpriced—an error rate of 87 per cent, a BBC spokeswoman said. The tickets should have cost £6,593.80 but in fact totalled £12,855.50—overcharging by £6,261.70.

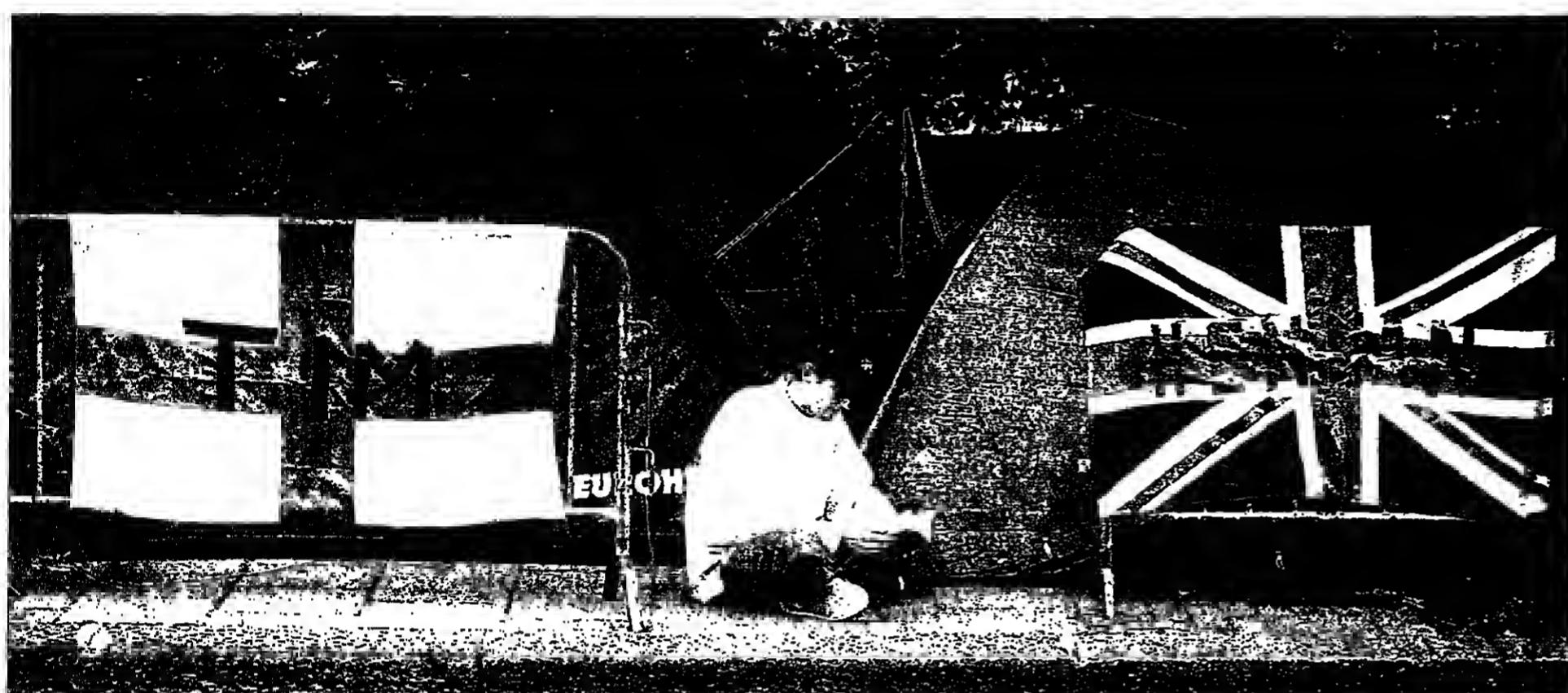
The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is appealing today against a ruling that he acted unlawfully in setting a minimum sentence for the schoolboy killers of two-year-old James Bulger. Government lawyers were preparing for a two-day battle at the Court of Appeal designed to protect the right of the Home Secretary to impose "tariffs" on juvenile murderers. The High Court ruled in May that Mr Howard was acting beyond his powers in ordering that

Robert Thompson and Jon Venables should be kept behind bars for 15 years for killing James in Bootle, Merseyside, in February 1993, when they were 10. It quashed the decision but granted leave to appeal. Judgment by the Court of Appeal is expected to be reserved until a later date. The new legal moves came as the pressure group Justice issued a new call for the Home Secretary to be stripped of all powers over setting tariffs for life sentences.

The most expensive theme-park ride to open this year in Britain is unveiled today. The multi-million pound attraction at Thorpe Park in Surrey claims to be the only ride in the world which plummets backwards, in total darkness. Called "X/No Way Out", the rollercoaster plummets from 40 feet at 40mph. It has taken four years to plan—including consultation with children—and is described as the most adventurous and innovative to open at Thorpe Park, which attracts about 1.4 million visitors a year.

New car buyers could save more than £1,000 if they were prepared to travel, according to a new survey. A Ford Escort 1.6LX on sale in London costs £12,955 but the identical model in Cardiff was £11,621, a saving of £1,334. The BBC TV *Value for Money* programme found that in Edinburgh the Escort could be had for £1,000 under the asking price. The smallest cut was in Bristol where the dealer took £500 off; in Manchester the reduction was £610 and in Birmingham £910. The worst time for discounts is August when the changing registration letter boosts sales. Around half a million new cars are likely to be sold then, so July is good for discounts as dealers want to clear old stock.

Two tickets hit the National Lottery jackpot on Saturday, winning £2.2m each. The winning numbers were 34, 35, 17, 27, 46, 4. The bonus ball was 7.



Flagging hopes: Fans of Tim Henman, Britain's emerging tennis star, queuing outside Wimbledon yesterday

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Tories in new defence row

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

£400 million from the defence budget to finance tax cuts and other spending programmes.

Michael Colvin, the Tory chairman of the Commons select committee on defence, warned Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, to keep his "hands off our national security" in preparing his next Budget.

"There would be a row if he tried to cut the defence budget and I just don't think he should."

"Our armed forces are at the moment overstretched. They need a period of future stability rather than further cuts."

He warned that it could backfire on the Tories. "With the election upon us the armed forces are going to see what the different parties say about their budgets."

The Cabinet will agree to keep a tight rein on public spending at a review of public spending on Thursday, but the Tory MP for Gosport, Peter Viggers, another member of the defence committee, said there was "certain" to be opposition if the cuts went ahead.

It came as the protests deepened over the £2bn sale of armed forces married quarters last night. A defence minister admitted that assurances by the Prime Minister that families would not be moved out against their will could be broken.

John Major told MPs last

Tuesday that no families would be moved out of their quarters against their will. But James Arbuthnot, the minister for defence procurement, admitted some could be offered "comparable" accommodation elsewhere.

Julian Brazier, the Tory backbencher leading the campaign to stop the sale, warned that Mr Major would have to intervene to uphold his assurance.

The Prime Minister has

been to Bosnia; he takes a ter-

rifically personal interest in the armed forces. He doesn't make pledges lightly and the pledge was made very clear on Tuesday," Mr Brazier said on BBC radio.

He said the deal, allowing site exchanges, would have to be "very substantially changed" to guarantee families would not be uprooted against their will. The doubts are certain to make the families who oppose the sale, dig in their heels, and it will strengthen opposition among Tory peers to the sale.

Peers are ready to defeat the Government on the final stages of the Housing Bill with an amendment which would scupper the sale for a year. Labour is also poised to force a vote in the Commons against the sale. Jonathan Aitken, a former defence minister, fuelled Tory backbenchers' rumours that the campaign is aimed at undermining the chances of Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, sweeping the right wing votes in a leadership contest with John Redwood.

Mr Aitken said: "There is a

sort of slight game of Portillo-hashing in some quarters."

"Some people may be playing that game and I would regret that if it was true."

Liberal Democrat defence spokesman Menzies Campbell said Mr Aitken's comments on BBC radio revealed splits among the Conservatives. "It is an extraordinary admission and will be deeply damaging to serve morale that the sale has become an issue between camps."

Leading article, page 13

One of those where Mr Harris declared an interest was Rom-Data Corporation. A Falmouth-based computer company, it applied for and was offered £750,000 of regional selective assistance cash in November 1991. The application was assessed by Mr Holmes, a businessman who has served as the board's chairman. After leaving he continued to work for the board as its external adviser, and had told the board when assessing the application that he had been offered a job with Rom-Data. Soon afterwards he became chairman.

In 1994, after receiving another £250,000 of DTI cash Rom-Data collapsed, owing £200,000 in wages. They like the DTI, have never recovered their money. The Serious Fraud Office and Devon and Cornwall police are looking into the collapse Rom-Data.

The DTI is reviewing all its

industrial development boards, looking at whether they have close links like the South-West board, with the companies applying for grants and if members have been properly declaring potential conflicts of interest.

## The men who handed out tax-payers' cash

Chris Blackhurst on a possible conflict of interest in South-West

As a senior partner in the South-West office of KPMG, the accountancy firm, Roger Harris advises many of the region's most thriving businesses. As chairman of the region's Industrial Development Board he assists the Department of Trade and Industry in deciding which companies in the South-West should have regional selective assistance grants.

Attending development board meetings is not much of an inconvenience for Mr Harris; his offices are in the same building as KPMG's in Plymouth. Last year, the South-West development board advised on grants totalling £7.4m. Six of those grants, worth £2.45m, were to companies in which Mr Harris has declared an interest. In fact on 31 occasions since he became chairman of the development board in 1991, grants were awarded to companies in which he had been offered a job.

Mr Harris is not alone. Mr Oppenheim's answer to David Jamieson, the Labour MP for Devonport, discloses that former and current South-West development board members, Kenneth Holmes, Michael Knight, Graham Stirling, Michael Jordon and Phil Gregory have also had to declare an interest in companies applying for grants.

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news

Barrie Clement, Labour Editor, reports on the latest boom industry – domestic service, and talks to a butler about the demands of the job

# Servants back in below-stairs Britain

Royals 'are the worst employers'

Servants are back. The wealthy, particularly those with new City money, are hiring more butlers, maids and chauffeurs than ever before.

Getting the paid help to take the strain out of living the high life has led to a doubling in the past two years of inquiries to one of the leading domestic help agencies in London.

While this has helped to push up pay rates of staff whose pay has been notoriously low, there is one group of employers which continues resolutely pay bottom dollar – the Royal households.

Their staff are among the lowest paid domestic staff in the capital and "hate" working there, according to the companies which supply them.

At any one time, around a third of the employees at Buckingham, Kensington and St James's palaces are on the books of employment agencies, anxious to escape the drudgery and low wages.

Even experienced royal butlers, the most senior servants, only earn around £12,500 a year compared to earnings of up to £40,000 elsewhere. First-class cooks and housekeepers make around £200 a week, half the amount they would expect to be paid in other grand houses in London, industry sources say. The volume of work is also greater at the palaces because of the amount of entertaining that goes on.

One source said: "There is an incredible throughput of employees. People do it to get their foot in the door, but that's it."

Agencies concede that servants receive an excellent training at the royal households and sometimes there are trips abroad. And a spell at one of the palaces is a clearly an unbeatable addition to the *curriculum vitae*.

Yet short royal arms and cavernous pockets remain a problem for the Windsors' servants. Almost as parsimonious are the aristocrats of London, but they find there is now mounting competition from the nouveau riche for the most experienced servants. The City's boardroom "fat cats" are increasingly spending a proportion of their earnings on domestic help and are pre-



You rang, sir? Discretion and honesty are the watchwords for a successful butler. Boris Roberts believes

pared to pay a little more than "old money". Between 70 and 95 per cent of the inquiries received by agencies now come from the newly rich.

Massey's Agency, a supplier of butlers, valets, footmen, chauffeurs, cooks, maids, nannies and assorted amanuenses, reported the 50 per cent increase in demand over the last two years.

The burgeoning demand for

servants, however, also highlights the growing gap between rich and poor in London.

In the latest edition of the Low Pay Unit's *New Review*, Rosie Cox, who teaches at Coventry University, points out that during the 1980s the richest 10 per cent of the capital's population saw their disposable income rise by 62 per cent whilst the poorest 10 per cent saw theirs fall by 17 per cent.

Wages for cleaners in central London are between £4 and £7 an hour, but there is no sick or holiday pay and the servants are often unpaid when their em-

ployers are away. Live-in domestic workers such as nannies and au-pairs do better. A qualified nanny will earn around £150 a week plus bed and board, while an au pair will earn as little as £35.

A survey of agencies supplying staff for the super-rich in London found there were more than 1,000 households which have two or more full-time employees. The old complaint that

"you just can't get the staff", seems to be true, but few enter the profession out of choice.

There is often a strong Upstairs-Downstairs flavour to the employer-employee relationship and many servants are expected to be servile. Sharing a house can be stressful with domestic workers feeling they are never off duty, even at night or on days off.

According to Ms Cox some

Photograph: John Lawrence

butlers are still required to iron their employer's newspapers. Ian McCartney, Labour's employment spokesman, expressed his disgust at the rising demand for servants.

"This was the generation of young people who were going to be our engineers, our designers, our scientists and our teachers. Instead we've turned them into nannies and skivvies for the fat cats".

However one should never be too familiar. "A butler should never cross the line between friendliness and familiarity. The same goes for the butler and the other household staff."



Princess of Wales: Frustrated by delays

## Prince close to divorce settlement offer

The Prince of Wales is set to offer the Princess a divorce settlement after 10 weeks of deadlock. A meeting between lawyers for the two sides is expected shortly, possibly this week, at which proposals will be put forward in reply to the Princess's demands.

Further negotiations are then likely, but insiders think a decree nisi could be granted "in weeks rather than months". The speed of the settlement largely depends on the Prince's financial offer.

Neither side is commenting on speculation surrounding the divorce following a request from the Queen that the negotiations should be confidential.

However, it now seems likely that the Prince will offer a clean-break settlement worth

between £15-£20m, although it is believed that he would have preferred to pay a "trip-feed".

The Princess, who celebrates her 35th birthday today, is thought to be ready to move quickly and has already expressed her frustration to the Queen over delays.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are thought to be keen for a swift end to the protracted divorce negotiations so as to close an unhappy chapter in the history of the House of Windsor.

If the Prince's offer, to be submitted by Fiona Shackleton of the Queen's solicitors Farrer & Co to the Princess's lawyer, Anthony Julius of Mishcon de Reya, is acceptable, a decree nisi could be granted before the es-

tranged couple's 15th wedding anniversary on 29 July. A petition from Prince Charles seeking a divorce by consent, based on a separation of more than two years, is the likeliest outcome. A decree absolute would take another six weeks.

If the Prince offers a clean-break cash settlement, he will need financial help from the Queen or may seek a loan. Although he is wealthy, he does not have the liquidity necessary to make a £15-£20m pay-off. His annual income of almost £5m from the Duchy of Cornwall leaves him with about £1.5m for personal expenses after deducting nearly £2.5m in official expenditure and £1m tax. He cannot sell off any Duchy assets as this wealth is held in trust by him for future heirs to the

throne. His personal portfolio of stocks and shares, thought to be worth more than £2m, would not finance the divorce.

As part of the eventual divorce settlement, the Princess is expected to continue living at Kensington Palace, although it is unlikely that the Prince will agree to her request to retain an office at St James's Palace, close to the Prince's London apartment.

Mounting speculation that the Princess, as the mother of a future king, will, contrary to earlier reports, retain the style "Her Royal Highness", is doubtful. It is more likely that she will be addressed "Diana, Princess of Wales".

Agreement must also be concluded, involving 10 Downing Street and the Foreign Office.

on the Princess's future public role and the status of any overseas visits by her. She has expressed a wish to be a "goodwill ambassador" for Britain, as well as a "Queen of Hearts" raising funds for charity and comforting the sick and needy.

The divorce settlement will include a so-called "gagging clause" restraining the Princess - and presumably the Prince - from publishing details about their failed relationship or going public in any other way.

There is agreement between the couple that access to their children, Prince William, 14, and 11-year-old Prince Harry, will be shared equally. Both the Prince of Wales and the Princess will have a continued close involvement in their sons' upbringing.



Prince Charles: Liquidity problem

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Football and race: Afro-Caribbean fans backed other teams in Euro 96 first in protest at tide of xenophobia

# Blacks 'withdrew England support'

CLARE GARNER

Some British blacks supported teams other than England in Euro 96 because they felt the torrent of nationalism verged on xenophobia, according to a survey by Britain's leading black newspaper published tomorrow.

More than half of the respondents in a poll by *The Voice* of Afro-Caribbean football supporters aged between 19 and 53 said they refused to back the two British teams in the international tournament. Some said they backed teams with the largest contingent of black players, such as Holland and France, but they preferred even Germany, which had no black players, to England.

One respondent felt so strongly that he hailed Gareth Southgate's crucial penalty miss as "the foot of God". Another complained that there were

insufficient black players in the England side, saying: "Les Ferdinand should have been there. They only used Ince. That wasn't right. Regardless of the strategic validity or not, [of Terry Venables's decision] it is the visual image that counts."

Herman Ousley, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Advisory Group Against Racism and Intimidation (AGARI), which tackles violence in football, insisted that the subject must be debated in a wider context.

Why, he asked, did so many Scots, for example, celebrate the England defeat?

Mr Ousley believes some blacks turned their backs on the England side for fear of what would follow an England victory. "What was natural patriotism turns to nationalism and becomes tinged with xenophobia as part of the jingoism. A lot of people feel

they have been at the sharp end of that sort of divide. What was most worrying for them is: 'Should England win this Euro 96, it will be neverending.'

He added: "Blacks would undoubtedly identify with teams with more black players. It's very natural when they feel there isn't the same representation that they can empathise with

within the national football side."

The survey again raises the question: "What does it mean to be British?" and recalls the infamous "cricket" test" proposed by Lord Tebbit. In 1990 the former cabinet minister told the *Los Angeles Times* that "a large proportion of Asian immigrants would fail this test of British nationality."

It was, he said, an "interesting test". "Are you still harking back to where you come from – or supporting where you are?" A nation is a nation "for what it shares in common", he said.

His views had not changed yesterday: "It could be applied to the English in Australia, the Spanish in America... it doesn't matter. The question is: 'Are

people integrated?' Do people wish to integrate into the society in which they live or do they wish to live in a ghetto. Blacks should, he argued, follow the Jewish example. "The Jewish population has answered the question very clearly by working in the country they lived in and adapting its values. It integrates while maintaining its own identity. Others should look to the same idea."

The choice is simple, according to Lord Tebbit. "Do you deal with it [the 'problem'] by integrating or by going into a ghetto. People have to make up their own minds. If you look at athletics one sees mainly ethnic teams and I fancy that most of the blacks who are in athletics for Britain are proud of carrying that flag. The fact that you don't find terribly many white rummages in many events, that's one of those things isn't it? Presumably they've selected the best. For me there are two criteria: one, do you wish to integrate. Two, do you select on merit. I'm in favour of integration and merit."

"If you say it [integration] hasn't happened yet, I'd point out that it was a long time after central and eastern Europeans arrived here before they found themselves in government coping with sneering idiots saying there were more Estonians than Estonians in Margaret Thatcher's government."

Photograph: Laurence Griffiths

Scotland was free to support whoever it liked, and it said nothing of a British identity crisis, he said. "In football there isn't a United Kingdom team. Who you support after your first country is up to you. I happen to have been born in Middlesex. That doesn't mean to say I wouldn't have a view on whether Yorkshire or Lancashire should win the county championship."

Ainsley Harriot, the black celebrity chef, felt there would have been room for a few more black faces "just to balance it". He suspects a "little bit" of discrimination in selection does occur, adding that it is no accident that blacks are more successful in individual than team sports. "I know Ian Wright for instance, and I talk to him about it. He said there's a real bonding between the lads themselves but it's upstairs at the chairmanship level where they are very protective about what they want their club to be. That generation thinks that way perhaps."

And did Ainsley support England when he went to Wembley for the semi-finals? "Of course. I've been born here. There's no denying it." But when it comes to cricket it's different. "I originate from Jamaica and I'm very proud of my roots. My cousin is the [former] West Indian wicket-keeper Jeffery Dujon, so I always support the West Indies in cricket."

# Jobs not at risk from £3.50 wage

BARRIE CLEMENT  
Labour Editor

Despite ministerial protestations a national minimum wage would not cost jobs, according to a seminal investigation conducted by one of Britain's leading experts on the issue.

Employers expect that a future Labour government would fix the rate at around £3.50 an hour which would have no impact on total employment, Dr Fred Bayliss points out in a paper published by the Employment Policy Institute which declares itself "neutral" in the debate.

"Even if some sections of industry are severely affected by a NMW [national minimum wage] this does not necessarily imply the kind of 'devastation' of jobs predicted by some opponents of the policy," Dr Bayliss says.

Some ministers have talked of hundreds of thousands of job losses.

Because of the paper's practical tone and the eminence of its author, a former chairman of the institute, the £3.50 figure – uprated in line with prices – is now likely to become something of a benchmark for Labour, in private at least.

The biggest unions are presently demanding £4.26 an hour, while the Trades Union Congress in a confidential docu-



Ian McCartney: Report vindicates Labour policy'

ment favours a figure nearer £3.65. The paper warns that employers believe the possible inflationary consequences of the sum are more significant than the effect on jobs, although the "price effects" should not be too severe.

Ian McCartney, a Labour employment spokesman, yesterday greeted the report as a vindication of its policy, while the Government may now be keen to emphasise the inflationary impact, however limited.

Dr Bayliss argues in the report, *Employers and a National Minimum Wage*, that the effect of the statutory minimum will vary markedly between different industries.

The sectors most affected – catering, textiles and industrial cleaning – will experience "accelerated restructuring". Many small companies will come under "severe pressure" and they will have to fight to survive.

In some cases prices will rise, although there will be "little or no impact" on jobs because surviving companies will take over contracts and offer "replacement" jobs, Dr Bayliss says.

Some companies argued that the minimum should be phased in rather than brought in as a "big bang". While Labour has indicated that the rate for 16- and 17-year-olds would be lower, employers also contend that adult trainees should be exempt from the full rate.

In interviews with 25 senior managers in the public and private sectors and officials of employers' organisations, Dr Bayliss found that pay differentials were another worry.

He suggests that "modesty should prevail" in the process of setting the rate or that a future Labour government might consider a more general form of pay policy to contain the inflationary impact.

The report suggests that the Low Pay Commission, envisaged by Labour as an advisory body to government, should be able to mount its own inquiries and be responsible for inspection and enforcement.

Dr Bayliss concludes: "The devil is in the detail. The commission must examine how the minimum will work at different levels. It is better to anticipate the potential pitfalls in advance than to have to react when those employers hardest hit start to shout."

Polly Toynbee, page 15

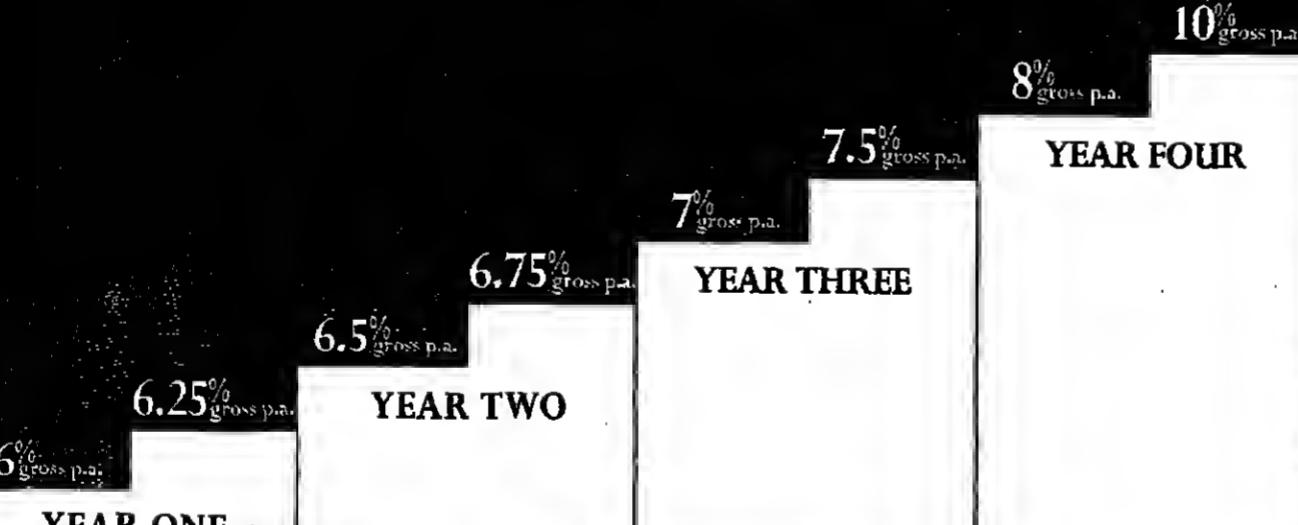


Lone voice: A rare black face among England supporters at Wembley during Euro 96

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news



New horizon: Residents of bomb-damaged Lantern House, which is to be demolished and replaced by low-rise flats. Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

## Bomb-blast estate to get £6m aid package

ROS WYNNE-JONES

The Docklands council estate badly damaged by the IRA bomb attack in February is to receive £6m in government aid.

Details of the loan emerged as Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, pledged financial assistance to help rebuild the centre of Manchester in the wake of last month's IRA bomb attack.

The Docklands explosion caused serious damage to parts of the Barbican Estate, near South Quay. The £6m will go towards demolishing Lantern House, a 1960s council block, and building 40 low-rise flats in their place. An additional 49 new homes will be built on nearby sites made available by the London Docklands Development Corporation.

The four tower blocks on the estate, which suffered considerable damage, will also benefit from the money, which has

been awarded by the Department of the Environment. In addition, a small garden is to be developed "in recognition of the courage of local residents".

In the days after the bomb, residents of the Isle of Dogs complained that government attention was centred on repairing damage to the commercial buildings at the expense of local people who had seen their home wrecked.

David Curry, the Housing Minister, said: "This additional money fulfils the commitment we gave immediately following the bombing, that the necessary funding would be made available to tackle urgently the bomb-damaged blocks and accelerate the existing Estate Action scheme." The money will bring total government support for the national Estate Action scheme, which aims to regenerate rundown estates, to £30m.

A majority of local residents have still received no compensation or assistance from the government for damage to personal possessions, however. A handful have been offered loans by the Department of Social Security, which most have had to turn down because they cannot afford repayments. Stephen Molynieux, a local councillor, said: "It is a pity that the DSS have not shown the same spirit towards bomb victims that the Department of the Environment have shown."

Campaigners in Manchester and Tower Hamlets have suggested a central fund to cover future bomb-damage, but Mr Heseltine last week ruled out blanket help for bomb victims.

Announcing a £50,000 donation to the Lord Mayor's appeal to help Manchester cope with immediate problems, he said he had to make it clear the Government could not introduce a "post-hoc" insurance scheme.

"If I were to do that no [business] would ever insure again."

## G7 urged to unite against terrorism

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

A plan to establish "centres of excellence" in combating terrorism is to be put to a meeting of ministers from the world's top seven developed countries by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

Mr Howard said yesterday he will also call for extradition to be improved between countries and for terrorists to be denied refugee status at the meeting of G7 ministers to be held in the wake of the IRA bombings in Manchester and Osnabrück, and the separate attack on a US base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Home Office officials said last night that the aim was to create a register so that countries can call on experts, such as Japanese security services who dealt with recent chemical attacks on their underground rail network by members of a religious cult.

The renewal of violence by the IRA is threatening to embarrass the Irish government, which takes over the presidency of the European Union today.

Andrew Hunter, chairman of the Tony Benn's Northern Ireland committee, told Sky News that he would be urging the Prime Minister and Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, to consider the reintroduction of internment to combat the heightened threat from the IRA.

Mr Hunter admitted such a policy - which might involve interning Sinn Féin members such as Martin McGuinness - could be counter-productive and added that the timing had to be right and there had to be public support for it. But he said: "I think you've got to say to yourself what is the lesser of evil: increasing, as some would argue, the rights of a minority, or protecting the majority against the threat of being killed or maimed by bombs."

The Irish Prime Minister,

Irish plans, page 10  
Being Irish in Britain, page 14

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## Message to Fisheries Minister, Rt Hon Tony Baldry MP.

Regarding industrial fishing for sandeels on the Wee Bankie off the Scottish coast and other areas of the North Sea.

"Recognizing the importance of protecting the marine environment and conserving fish feeding, spawning and nursery grounds, the following organizations and individuals call on the UK Government to ensure that urgent measures are taken to control industrial fishing in sensitive areas."

*Alex Falconer, MEP*

*Arbroath Fishermen's  
Association*

*David Bellamy*

*Fife Fisherman's  
Association*

*The Fishermen's  
Association Limited*

*Fishermen's Mutual  
Association (Pittenweem)*

*Friends of the Earth*

*Greenpeace UK*

*Jonathon Porritt*

*Marine Conservation  
Society*

*Royal Society for the  
Protection of Birds*

*The Salmon and Trout  
Association*

*Scottish Wildlife Trust*

*Tony Rice, Southampton  
Oceanography Centre*

*The Wildlife Trusts  
(Royal Society for  
Nature Conservation)*

*World Wide Fund  
for Nature*

If you also support this statement, please call the Greenpeace campaign information line on 0171 865 8252.

Or write to the Fisheries Campaign, Greenpeace, Canonbury Villas, London N1 2PN.

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## news

Theory exam: Multiple-choice questions introduced today

# First candidates sit written driving test

CLARE GARNER

From today, it will no longer be enough for learner drivers to show their examiner that they can drive. They will also have to prove that they know the theory by completing 35 multiple-choice questions.

The first candidates will today take the written test set by the Driving Standards Authority (DSA), and a week later, they will hear by post whether they have passed by getting at least 26 of the 35 questions right.

Until 1 January 1997, the practical test can still be taken first, but after that learners will

have to pass the written one, before booking for the driving part.

More than 3,500 candidates will take the written test - which costs £15 on top of the £28.50 fee for the old one - at 44 centres today and more than 8,000 will follow tomorrow.

There are over 60,000 bookings for the first fortnight and more than 88,000 for the first month.

In the most radical move in its 60-year history, the DSA has introduced the test in order to build up the "hazard-awareness" skills of young drivers. The 17- to 25-year-old age group is involved in 28 per cent of acci-

dents but accounts for only 16 per cent of all drivers.

However, a safety group warned yesterday that the new theory section, which replaces the Highway Code oral quiz, will not be enough substantially to reduce accidents involving young motorists.

A report from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (Pacts) called for a comprehensive package of measures to improve training, including giving instructors more say in when a candidate is ready to take their test.

The 40-minute written test consists of 35 questions which

have been selected at random from a list of 600, based on the Highway Code. They range from the medical effects of alcohol, car maintenance, basic first aid and the punishments for driving offences.

It will be held at 139 centres nationwide, and be given to all 1.7 million car, motorcycle, bus and lorry drivers who apply for licences each year.

The DSA believes learners will sail through the test as long as they "pre-prepare carefully and apply common sense". A spokesman said yesterday: "We are anticipating that there will be a better pass rate for the written test than there is for the practical test which is only passed first time by about half the candidates."

The British School of Motoring, Britain's biggest driving instruction company, was less hopeful. In mock tests of nearly 500 candidates only 30 per cent achieved the 75 per cent pass rate required and just one scored 100 per cent.



Maritime revival: Little Mint, an 83-year-old Brixham fishing smack restored by John Sheppard of Sussex, dredging for oysters in Swansea Bay at the weekend. The oyster beds have lain fallow for 50 years. Photograph: Rob Stratton

## How well do you know the Highway Code?

Are you a good driver?

Three questions from the new test:

1. You are involved in an accident and are unable to produce your insurance certificate. You must report the accident to the police within: a) 24 hours; b) 48 hours; c) 5 days; d) 14 days
2. How can you best control your vehicle when driving in snow? a) by driving slowly in a high gear; b) staying in a lower gear and gripping the steering wheel; c) driving in first gear; d) keeping the revs high and slipping the clutch.
3. By mistake you go past your motorway exit. You should: a) carry on to the next exit; b) carefully reverse on the hard shoulder; c) reverse in the left hand lane; d) make a U-turn.

Answers: 1. a. 2. a. 3. a.

## New Savings Rates from the Bristol & West.

EFFECTIVE 1ST JULY 1996 (unless otherwise stated).

† Effective 9th July 1996. †† Fixed with effect from 1st July 1996 until 31st December 1996.

ACCOUNT	AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS RATE OF INTEREST PA* (VARIABLE)	NET PA**	ACCOUNT	AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS RATE OF INTEREST PA* (VARIABLE)	NET PA**	
INSTANT ACCESS DEPOSIT	£100,000+	3.00%	2.40%	PREMIER OPTION BOND†	£100,000+	5.08%	4.06%	
	£50,000+	3.00%	2.40%	Fixed Rate Option paying Interest monthly, Issue 8.	£50,000+	5.08%	4.06%	
	£25,000+	2.85%	2.28%		£25,000+	4.89%	3.91%	
	£10,000+	2.55%	2.04%		£5,000+	4.65%	3.72%	
	£5,000+	2.05%	1.64%					
	£2,000+	1.80%	1.44%	PREMIER TWELVE	£100,000+	5.70%	4.56%	
	£1,000+	1.60%	1.28%	Variable (Issue 1) and Fixed (Issue 3)	£50,000+	5.70%	4.56%	
	£500+	1.35%	1.08%	Rate Options paying Interest annually.	£25,000+	5.65%	4.52%	
	£1+	0.20%	0.14%		£10,000+	5.65%	4.52%	
90 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT	£100,000+	4.30%	3.44%		£5,000+	5.65%	4.52%	
Interest paid annually.	£50,000+	4.15%	3.32%					
	£25,000+	3.85%	3.08%	PREMIER TWELVE	£100,000+	5.56%	4.45%	
	£10,000+	3.35%	2.68%	Variable (Issue 1) and Fixed (Issue 3)	£50,000+	5.56%	4.45%	
	£5,000+	2.80%	2.24%	Rate Options paying Interest monthly.	£25,000+	5.51%	4.41%	
	£2,500+	2.50%	2.00%		£10,000+	5.51%	4.41%	
	£500+	2.35%	1.88%		£5,000+	5.51%	4.41%	
90 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT	£100,000+	4.22%	3.37%	PREMIER TESSA	£5,000+	5.75%		
Interest paid monthly.	£50,000+	4.07%	3.26%		£5,000+	5.45%		
	£25,000+	3.78%	3.03%		£3,000+	5.45%		
	£10,000+	3.30%	2.64%		£500+	3.65%		
	£5,000+	2.76%	2.21%	PREMIER RESERVE BOND	£1,000+	5.55%	4.44%	
	£2,500+	2.47%	1.98%		SECURE INVESTMENT ACCOUNT (Issue 4).	£2,000+	6.20%	4.96%
	£500+	2.33%	1.86%					
ONE YEAR OPTION BOND DEPOSIT	£100,000+	5.70%	4.56%	CHARITY ACCOUNT	£1+	2.60%	2.08%	
Variable (Issue 1) and Fixed (Issue 3)	£50,000+	5.60%	4.52%					
Rate Options paying Interest annually.	£25,000+	5.65%	4.52%	FULLY PAID SHARE	£50,000+	2.18%	1.74%	
	£10,000+	5.65%	4.52%	(Rates also apply to Chestnut Investment Share, Chestnut Clubs, Chestnut Ex-Thrift and Chestnut Subs. Share, all no longer available).	£25,000+	2.08%	1.66%	
	£5,000+	5.65%	4.52%		£10,000+	1.79%	1.43%	
ONE YEAR OPTION BOND DEPOSIT	£100,000+	5.56%	4.45%		£5,000+	1.39%	1.11%	
Variable (Issue 1) and Fixed (Issue 3)	£50,000+	5.56%	4.45%					
Rate Options paying Interest monthly.	£25,000+	5.51%	4.41%	SECURE INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	£2,000+	0.90%	0.72%	
	£10,000+	5.51%	4.41%		£500+	0.25%	0.20%	
	£5,000+	5.51%	4.41%		£1+	0.20%	0.16%	
TESSA TWO DEPOSIT	£5,000+	5.75%		SELECT (No longer available).	£50,000+	2.20%	1.76%	
	£5,000+	5.45%			£25,000+	2.10%	1.68%	
	£3,000+	5.45%			£10,000+	1.80%	1.44%	
	£500+	3.65%			£5,000+	1.40%	1.12%	
PREMIER SAVER	£100,000+	4.00%	3.20%		£2,000+	0.90%	0.72%	
An instant access account for investors who limit their access over a 12 month period (no withdrawals).	£50,000+	4.00%	3.20%		£500+	0.25%	0.20%	
	£25,000+	3.85%	3.05%		£1+	0.20%	0.16%	
	£10,000+	3.54%	2.84%					
	£5,000+	3.05%	2.44%					
	£2,000+	2.80%	2.24%					
	£1,000+	2.60%	2.08%					
	£500+	2.35%	1.88%					
Up to 6 Withdrawals	£100,000+	3.00%	2.40%					
	£50,000+	3.00%	2.40%					
	£25,000+	2.95%	2.34%					
	£10,000+	2.55%	2.04%					
	£5,000+	2.05%	1.64%					
	£2,000+	1.80%	1.44%					
	£1,000+	1.60%	1.28%					
	£500+	1.35%	1.08%					
More than 6 Withdrawals	£100,000+	2.70%	1.76%					
	£50,000+	2.70%	1.76%					
	£25,000+	2.65%	1.71%					
	£10,000+	2.35%	1.44%					
	£5,000+	2.05%	1.28%					
	£2,000+	1.80%	1.44%					
	£1,000+	1.60%	1.28%					
	£500+	1.35%	1.08%					
PREMIER PLUS CAPITAL ISSUE 1	£100,000+	4.20%	3.37%					
Three months notice required for withdrawals. Rates also apply to Guaranteed Investment Account Issue 5 and Guaranteed Investment Account Extra Issue 11.	£50,000+	4.15%	3.32%					
	£25,000+	3.85%	3.08%					
	£10,000+	3.35%	2.68%					
	£5,000+	2.80%	2.24%					
	£2,000+	2.50%	2.00%					
	£500+	2.35%	1.88%					
PREMIER PLUS MONTHLY INCOME ISSUE 1	£100,000+	4.22%	3.37%					
Three months notice required for withdrawals, and interest paid monthly.	£50,000+	4.22%	3.36%					
	£25,000+	3.78%	3.03%					
	£10,000+	3.30%	2.64%					
	£5,000+	2.76%	2.21%					
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PREMIER OPTION BOND	£100,000+	4.00%	3.20%					
Variable Rate Option paying Interest six months, Issues A, B, C, D, E and F.	£50,000+	4.00%	3.20%					
	£25,000+	4.00%	3.20%					
	£10,000+	4.00%	3.20%					
	£5,000+	4.00%	3.20%					
	£2,000+	4.00%	3.20%					
	£500+	4.00%	3.20%					
PREMIER OPTION BOND	£100,000+	4.27%	3.43%					
Fixed Rate Option paying Interest six months, Issues A, B, C, D, E and F.</								

**Battle of the Somme commemorations:** Veterans pay respects to comrades slaughtered 80 years ago as Portillo stays away

# 'What a waste. The biggest mistake ever'

PAUL TYSON

Veterans of the Battle of the Somme, where 200,000 British soldiers were killed in a single day, returned yesterday to the fields in which they fought, some for the first time in 80 years.

Five men who survived the carnage, the youngest is 100, visited the British cemetery at Arras and the battlefields where the cream of an entire generation was wiped out on 1 July 1916.

At 7.30 that morning after the German lines had been pounded for a week with one and a half million shells, more than 400,000 troops, most of them British, went over the top to launch the bloodiest battle in military history.

The Allies vastly outnumbered the Germans yet by nightfall the British alone had suffered 57,470 dead and wounded. The Germans lost just 18,500.

Most of the dead were volunteers who answered Kitchener's call to arms fight for their country and were sent into battle with a bare minimum of training.

Donald Hodge, 101, from East Storrington, west Sussex, said: "The last thing I thought about before the war was joining the army, the old regulars were a bunch of scallywags. But when the call came, it seemed the right thing to do."

"We had no uniforms or any equipment for months, and we lived in tents because there were no huts to put us up in.

"My memories of the Somme are very mixed. Everything was haywire. We were playing it by ear. The German Chiefs of Staff were cleverer than ours

and they had deep dug-outs so most of our bombardment had no effect.

"The first week of July was a wholesale slaughter, no end of my friends died. The bodies were piled up high.

"We were young and fit and we took it all in our stride. Whatever the orders were, we just obeyed them, that's how we were then."

Mr Hodge, who was in the Royal West Kent Regiment, added: "I feel it is a duty to come back. I must come back for the sake of my friends who lie here. It could so easily have been me instead of them."

"We were very, very close, we trained together, we marched together, we fought together, we were closer than brothers but you learned to lose friends without unduly grieving, otherwise we would have gone mad."

Mike Lally, 102, from Salford, Greater Manchester was visiting his older brother James' grave yesterday for the first time. "That's the reason I came over this time, to find my brother's grave," he said.

"Our mother used to visit it every year but she never would tell us where it was. She never used to talk about it."

The First World War Veterans' Association, who brought Mr Lally and 12 other veterans back to France, traced the grave through the War Graves Commission and Mr Lally held onto his son's arm and broke down in tears as he stood before the simple white headstone.

Afterwards he said: "All them years I had never seen it." Looking around at the rows of neat white gravestones in the British cemetery near Arras on the Somme, he added: "All

them lives. What a waste. It was the biggest mistake ever. They threw so many men into that battle, it was a complete waste."

Norman Booth, 100, from Golcar, near Huddersfield, a 1914 volunteer with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, said:

"They're shocking, my memories of the Somme. I thought it was a disgrace that they should lose all those men in one day."

Mr Booth, awarded the DSM and Bar, added: "To see all those lads slaughtered in that swamp, it broke my heart. It made me very angry. It still does."

The years have clearly done nothing to assuage the anger felt by many of the veterans who saw so many of their contemporaries perish. Tom Brennan, 100, a gunner, who now lives in a Liverpool nursing home, said of the first day of the Somme: "I went up there that evening and you could hardly see the ground for the dead."



Over the top: The first day of the Battle of the Somme cost 57,470 British lives. The Germans lost only 18,500



Call of duty: Donald Hodge, 101, of Seaford, Sussex, will be in France today for the 80th anniversary of the Somme

Photograph: John Connor

## Ministers attacked for 'poor show'

The Government and Ministry of Defence were under fire from veterans for their "poor show" at today's service to commemorate the Battle of the Somme, writes Paul Tyson.

Both John Major and Michael Portillo, Secretary of State for Defence, were said to be "too busy" to attend the ceremony in Thiepval this morning where Somme veterans will gather to remember the dead of the bloodiest battle in British military history.

Baroness Thatcher told the *Sunday Telegraph* that she found it "completely incredible that a

British defence minister should not personally represent the armed forces". Instead, Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, will represent the Government.

Ted Rimmer, 97, who fought in France with the King's Liverpool Regiment from 1917, said: "I think they should have sent someone important, the Home Secretary made it to Dover to see us off so why couldn't he make it over here?"

"It is a unique occasion isn't it? I think it's a poor show. I can't say I'm angry, I'm more disappointed than angry."

Steve Goodwin, Chairman of the First World War Veterans' Association, said: "To the veterans themselves it is more important that their friends and families are around them,

"We would agree that if the Government are going to send somebody it should be somebody important. We have rescued a lot of these men from obscurity and a lot of them will be going back to live on their own or in nursing homes and for one or two in poverty."

"Those are the matters that should be addressed rather than whether we get a hand-

shake or two from a member of the Government."

Others were more forgiving. Donald Hodge, aged 101, said: "We didn't ask for any rewards at the time and we're not going to ask for them now."

I have some sympathy with what Baroness Thatcher said but we don't expect a fuss."

Told the next official anniversary was in 2016, he added:

"Well, I always live in hope."

An Ministry of Defence spokesman said: "Apparently it is usual that only the 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries are official commemorations."



Two things you're guaranteed to see every day in the Arizona sky.

From 1st July, British Airways are introducing a daily London Gatwick-Phoenix-San Diego service. For more information, see your travel agent or call 0345 222111.

**BRITISH AIRWAYS**  
The world's favourite airline

From 27th October, flights are 4 times a week. All flights go to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

## news

# Safety worry as 'no-frill' airlines take off in UK

The recent passengers' revolt on two Excalibur Airlines flights and the subsequent liquidation of the airline has raised safety fears over the cheap end of the air-travel market.

There is unease in some quarters over the launch of no-frills cheap airlines such as Easyjet and Debonair which offer much cheaper fares than their more conventional rivals. On Debonair, for example, you can fly to Barcelona for £99 return, including airport tax. Easyjet offers £29 one-way fares to Glasgow (although there are few seats at that price and, depending on availability, you have to pay £39, £49, or £59).

The airlines use older aircraft, leased rather than owned, and have done away with such extra costs as food and drink. Costs are kept to a minimum by having no tickets and computerised booking systems which require few staff.

Charter firms have offered cheap fares for decades, but the entry of these new no-frills carriers into the scheduled market is a new test for the Civil Aviation Authority. Some critics argue that the authority should not be responsible for both commercial promotion and regulation of the airline industry.

The CAA argues that there is no problem with safety. It points to the fact that airlines operating out of the UK have

Christian Wolmar reports on the arrival of cut-price carriers

to be licensed, the aircraft have to have certificates of airworthiness and the maintenance firms have to be CAA approved.

There is no equivalent in the aviation industry to "flagging out", the use by shipping companies of flags of convenience, which allow them to use cheaper foreign crews. Pilots for British airlines have to be licensed by the CAA and are subjected to regular fitness tests. The CAA points out that the same rules are applied whether the airline is Easyjet or British Airways.

In fact, there is some irony in the fact that BA was the company that maintained Excalibur's two ageing DC10 aircraft.

Mr Gazzard points to the similar situation in the USA where the new no-frills company, ValuJet, grew very fast as a rival to established airlines and within less than three years of its creation operated 50 jets across the US. The crash in Florida in May which killed 110 people was probably not the airline's fault as it appears to have been the result of a fire caused by inflammable cargo in the hold, but it led to an investigation of the airline which revealed serious deficiencies in maintenance procedures and the subsequent grounding of the airline.

Indeed, while the CAA says it treats all airlines equally, there is some suspicion from within the industry that Excalibur had been targeted for special attention because of concern over its financial viability. While the safety incidents may have contributed to its

collapse, the main reason appears to be fierce competition on its principal route, charter flights to Florida, which has an enormous amount of overcapacity.

Despite the CAA's lack of concern, some air industry watchers are worried. Jeff Gazzard, one of the leaders of the campaign against a second runway at Manchester Airport, accepts that the CAA's procedures are generally tight but feels that they have a confused regulatory role: "The CAA has a duty to both promote the air industry and to ensure it is safe. There can be a conflict there."

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Mr Gazzard says: "Rather than waiting for an accident before realising there is a problem, we should learn from the US experience. There should be an inquiry into how to separate out the possible conflicting roles of the CAA." He compares the CAA's position with that of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food over BSE and other food scares in which it was trying both to regulate and promote an industry.

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The social security system acts as a deterrent to training and "rewards passivity", ministers have been told by leaders of the government-sponsored Training and Enterprise Councils.

Stephen Byers, Labour's employment spokesman, said yesterday that he had received a leaked copy of a TEC briefing paper for a meeting between their national council and James Paice, the Employment minister, earlier this month.

The paper said: "Whilst there have been improvements in the performance of programmes such as Training for Work, TECs are aware that there remain a number of barriers to tackling the problems of particularly the long-term unemployed."

It said that those barriers included: "The operation of the benefits system which acts as a disincentive to individuals to undertake training and rewards passivity."

The TEC national council told the minister that there was "insufficient opportunity for meaningful work experience, which unemployed people say they want".

It also claimed there was a lack of effective guidance and advice; no integration of resources; and a "lack of a strategic approach at national and local level which means that re-

sources are dissipated and efforts duplicated."

Presenting an analysis of government training programmes that could have been written by Labour or the Liberal Democ-

"The contract must be one based on entitlement through a clear and deliverable guarantee of a job with skills, in return for active engagement on the part of the unemployed," the council said.

Mr Byers said yesterday: "This represents a damning indictment of the Government's whole approach to the unemployed."

It is clear that the benefits system presently acts as a disincentive for individuals to undertake training.

"What is needed is a comprehensive strategy under which the benefits system actively encourages the unemployed to take up training opportunities and update their skills."

The TEC paper also carries a warning about the social consequences of doing nothing about the problem, saying: "TECs recognise that however well the economy performs in the years to come, there are likely to be persistent high levels of long-term unemployment for the foreseeable future."

"Associated with this is the risk of the development of an underclass that will be unable to benefit from economic growth and improving employment prospects when they occur."

## Danish fleet retreats in fish battle

A renewed battle between Greenpeace protesters and Danish fishermen ended last night after the Danes appeared to pull out of waters off Scotland's east coast.

According to Greenpeace, the trawlers decided to withdraw while a complaint to Scottish fishery protection officials that they were being prevented from fishing was dealt with.

Spokesman Phil Aikman, aboard the Greenpeace vessel *MV Sirius*, said nine fishing boats had left an area 25 miles north-east of Dunbar, and protesters were checking to see if they had moved on to other fishing grounds.

The battle, over allegations that foreign trawlers were "hoovering" the sea-bed, resumed earlier yesterday when Greenpeace returned to the area from which activists said they had been chased on Friday by Danish boats fishing for sand-eels.

Leading environmental groups have joined forces with fishermen's organisations in a call for action on industrial fishing. In a statement in today's *Independent*, the alliance urges Tony Baldry, the Fisheries Minister, to protect the marine environment on the *Wee Bankie* off the Scornish east coast and other areas of the North Sea.

The statement says: "Recognising the importance of protecting the marine environment and conserving fish feeding, spawning and nursery grounds, we call on the UK government to ensure that urgent measures are taken to control industrial fishing in sensitive areas."

The advertisement coincides with an eight-week battle between Greenpeace and a fleet of Danish vessels off Scotland's east coast in which protesters have been trying to stop the fishing of sand-eels.

"Dolphins, Minke whales and seabirds depend on these sand-eels. This area is their feeding ground," said Chris Rose, of Greenpeace. "The vessels also catch haddock and cod which they don't need anyway. Fishermen are dependent upon these fish. So apart from endangering the environment, these vessels are also threatening the business of fishermen."

He added that companies could use vegetable oil instead of the fish oil they received from the sand-eels.

The alliance also includes Friends of the Earth, RSPCA, The Wildlife Trust, Alex Falconer MEP, and several Scottish fishing associations.

A naval fishery protection vessel patrolling the area had earlier sought an assurance from the demonstrators that they would keep two miles clear of the Danish boats, said Mr Aikman. But activists replied that they intended to continue "non violent direct action".

Before the Danes moved out, Greenpeace said it had two inflatables trying to prevent any vessel from setting its nets, but the *Sirius* stayed two miles away from the inflatables.

Greenpeace claims that legal "hoover-type" fishing, mainly by Danes, threatens a major feeding area for commercial fish stocks, birds and dolphins.



Looking for clues: Investigators searching the area of Everglades swamp where the ValuJet plane crashed in May, killing 110 people

## TEC chiefs attack benefits system

ANTHONY BEVINS  
Political Editor

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Presenting an analysis of government training programmes that could have been written by Labour or the Liberal Democ-

"The contract must be one based on entitlement through a clear and deliverable guarantee of a job with skills, in return for active engagement on the part of the unemployed," the council said.

Mr Byers said yesterday: "This represents a damning indictment of the Government's whole approach to the unemployed."

It is clear that the benefits system presently acts as a disincentive for individuals to undertake training.

"What is needed is a comprehensive strategy under which the benefits system actively encourages the unemployed to take up training opportunities and update their skills."

The TEC paper also carries a warning about the social consequences of doing nothing about the problem, saying: "TECs recognise that however well the economy performs in the years to come, there are likely to be persistent high levels of long-term unemployment for the foreseeable future."

"Associated with this is the risk of the development of an underclass that will be unable to benefit from economic growth and improving employment prospects when they occur."

It said that those barriers included: "The operation of the benefits system which acts as a disincentive to individuals to undertake training and rewards passivity."

The TEC national council told the minister that there was "insufficient opportunity for meaningful work experience, which unemployed people say they want".

It also claimed there was a lack of effective guidance and advice; no integration of resources; and a "lack of a strategic approach at national and local level which means that re-

sources are dissipated and efforts duplicated."

Presenting an analysis of government training programmes that could have been written by Labour or the Liberal Democ-

"The contract must be one based on entitlement through a clear and deliverable guarantee of a job with skills, in return for active engagement on the part of the unemployed

Russian election run-off: Doubts over his health prompt president to step back into limelight

# Yeltsin takes a tough stance to woo voters

TONY BARBER  
Moscow

After disappearing from sight on the eve of Russia's presidential election, Boris Yeltsin sought to dispel doubts about his health yesterday with a lengthy interview full of calculated appeals to both nationalist and liberal voters.

The interview, published by the Interfax news agency three days before Wednesday's second round of voting in the presidential elections, was notable for the tough line taken by the President on relations with Nato, the Baltic states and Japan. Warning Nato not to expand its influence over Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Mr Yeltsin said: "To anyone who has doubts, I want to say that Russia is not going to leave the Baltic, and we will strengthen and develop our military base in Baltiisk [in the Kaliningrad enclave]. Peter the Great did not open a window to Europe and reach the Baltic region just for us to board it up."

He also warned against attempts to change the status of the Turkish-controlled straits joining the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, saying: "Russia will react strongly to attempts to turn the Black Sea into yet

another bridgehead for the Nato fleet and non-Black Sea states." In what looked like an overture to nationalist voters in the Russian Far East, he said Russia rejected Japan's claims to the Kurile Islands, occupied by Soviet forces at the end of the Second World War.

He told Interfax that once the election was over he would make his first visit as President to the Kuriles. Such statements, stressing Russia's role as a great power, appeared to be aimed at Russians who voted in the first round last month for Alexander Lebed, the retired general who later received two powerful national security posts in the presidential administration, or for Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the ultra-nationalist.

But Mr Yeltsin also took care to woo supporters of Grigory Yavlinsky, the liberal economist, saying he should play an important part in forming the next government.

The President was last seen in public on 26 June, when he greeted military academy graduates in the Kremlin and toasted them with a glass of vodka. His campaign team attributed his subsequent absences to a busy schedule of speeches and interviews which caused him to lose his voice.

Gennady Zyuganov, his Communist opponent, on Wednesday, tried to extract maximum capital from Mr Yeltsin's withdrawal from the public stage. "At 65, after two serious heart attacks, you can't be in good health," he said.

Adding to the atmosphere of pre-election confusion, Mr Lebed announced yesterday that he wanted to recreate the vice-presidency in Russia – a job that Mr Yeltsin abolished in 1993 after its then incumbent, Alexander Rutskoi, participated in an armed uprising against him.

Mr Lebed, who clearly sees himself as Mr Yeltsin's natural successor, said: "We need this post and a person who would assume constitutional powers and take political and even military decisions."

Eleven foreigners were expelled and 28 Russian citizens were arrested on spying charges last year, AP reports. President Yeltsin said that, in 1995, Russia's security services thwarted 67 attempts to pass secret information, presumably to foreign intelligence organisations.

"Eleven agents of foreign intelligence services who had worked under the roofs of their embassies were caught red-handed and ousted from Russia," the President told Interfax.



Ahead of the times: A Yeltsin supporter proclaims his allegiance at an election rally in Moscow; the second round of voting takes place on Wednesday. Photograph: AFP

## Plain-speaking son of a rough Russian city

Helen Womack visits Tula, the adopted town of General Alexander Lebed (below)

Tula — "Anyone who doubts that Russia has her own special path should try travelling on our roads," said the nationalist retired general Alexander Lebed during his election campaign.

Indeed, the road to Tula is strewn with fairy lights to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Russia's notorious hit-and-run traffic police. But directional signs are few and far between and, a mere 100 miles south of the capital, you can easily lose yourself on roads that start out covered with asphalt and quickly deteriorate into dirt tracks.

General Lebed, Tula's adopted son, came third in the first round of the presidential election and now plays a pivotal role in deciding the future of the country. Nationwide, General Lebed took nearly 15 per cent of the vote on the 16 June, but Tula gave him an impressive 25 per cent. This was because of his long association with the city, famous for manufacturing arms and samovars.

Alexander Lebed was born in 1950 in the region of the Don Cossacks, but, after serving in Afghanistan, he came to Tula to command the paratroop division which is based here. Last December, he was elected to the State Duma as Tula's constituency MP.

The Tula region, where the author Leo Tolstoy had his estate, stands halfway between Moscow, which has benefited most from President Yeltsin's market reforms, and the "black-earth" farming zone running down to the Ukrainian border, where the Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, can count on his strongest support.

Here, General Lebed's philosophy of economic freedom but strict law and order appears to have found a particular resonance. The paratroopers of Tula have voted *en masse* for their former commander, who is respected in the army for his

professionalism and plain talking. But many civilians also chose him because they believed he offered a third way between the anarchy of Mr Yeltsin's rule and the defeat of retards towards Communism.

The Yeltsin years have hardly changed the face of Tula, which still looks like any one of a hundred Soviet cities with its regional administration block and statue of Lenin in the cen-

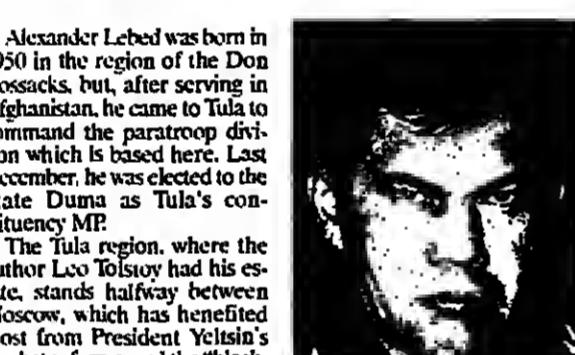
tral square. A few kiosks selling low-quality imported goods are the only achievement of four years of capitalism. Few, if any, can afford to shop there.

"Conversion has been very patchy," says Konstantin Leonov, deputy editor of the local newspaper *Molodoy Komuny*, who combines his journalistic work with acting as General Lebed's spokesman in the region.

some support, even among his paratroopers. "I consider that he has betrayed us," said a paratrooper major, Vyacheslav. Pressed to say why, he said he thought the general had "taken on a burden he can't manage. How can you fight crime when the whole population is impoverished?" Putting poor people behind bars is not the solution." He would vote for Mr Zyuganov.

Evidently what had really upset the major was General Lebed's alliance with Mr Yeltsin, who he could not forgive for the war in Chechnya. "I have sent my lads to that meat grinder," he said before abruptly breaking off the conversation.

For many Russians – and not only Communists – the Kremlin leader remains unpalatable. The odds are on his victory in the second round of the presidential elections on Wednesday. But it is not yet a foregone conclusion.



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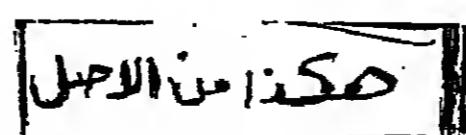
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## international

# Bruton sets out Irish strategy for leading EU

SARAH HELM

Dublin

John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, is launching a new marketing strategy for an old product. The product is called "Europe" and Mr Bruton knows it is going to be a hard sell.

Consumer confidence in the product has been ebbed of late. "Most people haven't a clue what Europe is trying to achieve," Mr Bruton told journalists as he set out Ireland's programme for its six-month rotating European Union presidency, which starts today.

It is vital, he said, to "bridge the gap" between the leadership of the EU and its citizens. Mr Bruton conceded that the task would be long and hard. But he announced a new slogan as the centrepiece of his campaign: "Secure peace, safe streets, solid money and secure jobs." His new theme is "memorability", because "people can only recall four things at once."

The question is whether Mr Bruton's campaign strategy for Europe contains anything new. Ireland takes over the presidency of the EU at a testing time. Just a week ago Europe's heads of government were desperately trying to patch over divisions caused by the beef war, and it will be Ireland's aim to ensure that the aftershocks of the crisis do not continue to undermine progress on Europe's bigger projects.

By December, Mr Bruton hopes that member states will have agreed a draft treaty on how to rebuild Europe's institutions in the negotiations of the inter-governmental conference (IGC). The Irish also expect to preside over the first serious estimates of which countries will be ready to join European Monetary Union. In December member states will produce their own economic forecasts for 1997, thereby indicating whether they expect to meet the Maastricht criteria to qualify for the launch in January 1999.

While steering Europe's en-

gine of integration steadily onwards, Mr Bruton has chosen the additional role of bringing the aims of the Union back into focus for its citizens. His strategy may be glossier and snappier, but its message appears to contain little that is new.

"Secure peace" is a slogan which will have little meaning for most Europeans, whose closest experience of war in recent times has been the conflict

jobs" is a slogan which has been shouted from the European rooftops for many years. Every EU summit in recent times has been presented as a "summit for jobs".

Mr Bruton concedes that the slogan is little more than an attempt to focus Europe's values,

and does not offer any meaningful answers to the problems of unemployment. He hopes that a new chapter on employment will be inserted into Europe's new treaty during the IGC. But he said last week: "I cannot think of anything which we cannot already do under existing EU law on employment. But we need new political focus."

Ireland is well-positioned to be the country promoting new confidence in the European Union. It likes to boast that it is the most enthusiastic country about Europe in the Union.

The causes of this enthusiasm lie all around, as signs pop up proclaiming that roads, bridges and factories have been built thanks to EU regional aid fund.

European Union membership is partly the cause for Ireland's successful economy which is likely to steer it towards membership of the first wave of countries in the single currency. However, even the Irish may not be entirely convinced by Mr Bruton's new campaign.

On the horizon looms the prospect of the enlargement of the Union, whereby Eastern European countries will be given membership, expanding the union to up to 27 members. Ireland can only lose during this process, as the EU cake is carved up once again and funds flow out to the poorer cousins to the East.

Over the next six months the Irish presidency will battle to shore up the rights of smaller countries when the process of enlargement gets under way. But all the signs are that regaining popular confidence in the European product is set to get harder. Mr Bruton's hard-hitting slogans seem unlikely to be enough.



John Bruton: Determined to bridge gaps within the EU

in the former Yugoslavia which the EU was unable to avert. "Safe streets" is intended to inspire the citizens with confidence that the EU is now playing a prime role in combating drugs and international crime. But promises of a new "war on drugs" are likely to ring hollow when the debate reverts to an arcane institutional wrangle over how to give the Brussels institutions more power over justice and home affairs.

"Solid money" is a slogan which attempts to boost confidence in the coming of the euro. But European citizens so far remain unconvinced of the euro's "solidity" and are unlikely to be won over without more convincing proof of the benefits of the single currency. "Secure



Seeking dignity in death: Paul O'Grady's advocacy of voluntary euthanasia has brought the issue to public attention

Photograph: AP

## Australia hails courage of politician's declaration

### LOCAL HEROES

No 23: Paul O'Grady

When he resigned suddenly as an MP in January, rumours about Paul O'Grady began flying. The 35-year-old Labor Party member of the New South Wales state parliament had achieved something of a celebrity status six years earlier when publicly declared that he was a homosexual. Plenty of other prominent Australians have "come out": actors, writers, lawyers, academics and one of Sydney's most prominent rugby league stars, who did so recently on a popular television sports programme, *The Footy Show*.

But Mr O'Grady is the first Australian politician to declare that he is gay. Last week, he resurfaced after disappearing from public view for six months to confirm what the rumour-mongers had been suggesting: he has AIDS. He chose television to make his latest announcement, on a current affairs programme, *Witness*, hosted by Australia's biggest television personality, Jane Wendi.

There was no reporter, just Mr O'Grady and occasionally his mother, Val, speaking directly to camera.

The response was overwhelming. Mr O'Grady has been hailed for his courage in speaking out over his fight against HIV, which has infected 20,000 Australians since 1983, resulting in 4,700 deaths. As Bob Carr, the premier of New South Wales, and leader of the state's ruling Labor Party, told viewers: "Having a politician say, 'This is my life, HIV and AIDS', is a reminder to everyone that a lot more of this is going to happen in our society."

Paul O'Grady grew up in the sprawling western suburbs of Sydney with politics in his blood. He was still under 30 when he won a seat as a left-wing candidate in the Legislative Council, the state's upper house, where political deals are fought over. It was in that chamber, and on the streets outside it, that Mr O'Grady fought another prominent MP, the Rev Fred Nile, leader of the anti-gay, pro-Christian, pro-family values *Call in Australia* Party.

Mr Nile has tried unsuccessfully to outlaw the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, an annual street carnival in which Mr O'Grady marches. "We want to restore Sydney as a clean city, morally and spiritually," he says.

It is not surprising, then, that

Robert Milliken

Mr O'Grady sees his decisions to go public about both his sexuality and AIDS as overtly political. He decided to leave parliamentary life, he says, because he was no longer well enough to stand up in its rigours. He felt that he should use his energies fighting not just his disease but also the ignorance and prejudice surrounding it.

His campaign goes beyond the gay community. Having seen many people die painfully from AIDS and other fatal illnesses, Mr O'Grady believes strongly in voluntary euthanasia. Last year, he introduced a private member's bill to parliament to legalise such processes. It is unlikely to succeed. The Labor Party, in which Irish Catholic influences are strong, is against it.

Yet Mr O'Grady is far from a lone voice. In the Northern Territory, Australia's least populous region, the world's first law allowing voluntary euthanasia is due to come into force today. Politicians in the rest of Australia are up in arms about it, and Canberra is threatening to pass overriding legislation to nullify the territory's law.

Mr O'Grady's advocacy, from a deeply personal perspective, has got Australians discussing the law's pros and cons in a way that might not have happened otherwise. "I have never understood how lying in a hospital bed rolling away is dying with dignity," he says. "Life is about quality of life, and death should be a quality death."

The former MP looks more physically robust than he did when he quit parliament in January, the product of a lengthy holiday and, as he puts it, "fighting with mind over matter". Whenever his time comes, and whatever the law, he says that he has doctor friends "ready to help and guide me". How? "I hope, if I need to, that I can hold my arm and have a little needle which takes me off quietly and peacefully after I've said my farewells. That's how I'd like to do it."

## Suicide-bomb attack kills five in Turkey

Tunceli (Reuters) — At least five soldiers were killed and 25 people wounded in a suicide-bomb attack on a military parade in the eastern Turkish town of Tunceli yesterday, when a female bomber blew herself up in the town's central square.

Security officials said the attack was the work of Kurdish guerrillas who have recently threatened suicide attacks.

The attack happened two days after the creation of an Islamist-led government that ended nine months of political turmoil in Turkey.

Around 20,000 people have died in a 12-year campaign by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) guerrilla group, fighting for independence or autonomy.

The rebels are often active in the mountains around Tunceli.



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## international

## Mexico shocked by new guerrilla uprising

PHIL DAVISON  
Latin America Correspondent

The Mexican stock market and the peso is forced for setbacks today after the stunning weekend emergence of a self-styled new guerrilla army near the glitzy Pacific resorts of the southern state of Guerrero.

Calling themselves the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), several dozen uniformed, well-armed, masked men and women appeared at a public rally in the lush hills

above Acapulco, fired volleys in the air and called for the overthrow of the government.

Later on Friday night, about 20 armed men in similar garb clashed with police at a road-block not far away, wounding three policemen with fire from AK-47 assault rifles before melting into thick foliage.

The group's emergence shocked Mexico, where masked Indian peasants calling themselves Zapatistas and led by a pipe-smoking intellectual in a black balaclava – the oow-leg-

endar Subcomandante Marcos – rose against the government in the south-eastern state of Chiapas in January 1994.

The ERP in Guerrero said it had no connection with the Zapatistas. But its proclaimed aims sounded similar and Mexican commentators said the group, while posing no direct military threat to the Mexican army, could be a serious destabilising force for a government whose popularity is sliding.

The Zapatistas have not fought with the Mexican army

since the rising but have remained a thorn in its flesh and have negotiated serious political concessions.

Some analysts felt it was no coincidence that the guerrillas in Guerrero emerged minutes after a speech by the leader of Mexico's left-wing parties, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, who suggested they may have been concocted by one or other political faction – even, perhaps, one within the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) – as a lever of power.

Friday's incident occurred at

left-wing factions and has visited Subcomandante Marcos's jungle hideout in Chiapas.

Other commentators noted that the new guerrillas were suspiciously well-armed and equipped for a peasant movement, far more so than the ragtag Zapatistas in Chiapas, and suggested they may have been concocted by one or other political faction – even, perhaps, one within the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) – as a lever of power.

On Friday, the 50 men and 10

women in crisp olive uniforms and carrying AK-47s or AR-15

rifles emerged from the hills in military formation, laid a wreath to the 17 victims and fired 17 shots in the air. They were wearing red-and-black ERP shoulder insignia and covered their faces with black bandanas tucked beneath black baseball caps.

Reading a manifesto in both Spanish and the local Indian language of Nahuatl, their leader, "Commander Ignacio", said President Ernesto Zedillo's government was "illegitimate, anti-popular, anti-democratic

and sustained fundamentally by the arms of the military and police". Mr Zedillo's PRI has

ruled for nearly seven decades, traditionally using fraud to keep growing opposition at bay.

"Moved by the unjust conditions of our life and work, we want a democratic and revolutionary transformation of our homeland," the guerrillas said before disappearing into thick hillsides forest after 20 minutes.

They were later sought by jeep loads of heavily-armed soldiers in torrential rain driven.

## Karadzic defies court by securing re-election

TONY BARBER  
Europe Editor

Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, has defied international efforts to force his removal from power by securing re-election as the head of his ruling party and by retaining the title of president of the Bosnian Serb republic.

At a congress of the ruling Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), all but one of the 353 delegates re-elected Mr

Swedish official responsible for enforcing the Dayton accord, said the Bosnian Serb leader had handed over his presidential powers to his deputy, Biljana Plavsic.

But Ms Plavsic quickly contradicted Mr Bildt, commenting that until elections due on 14 September "Karadzic is the president and I am the vice-president". A copy of a letter that Mr Karadzic sent to Mr Bildt made clear that the Bosnian Serb leader regarded himself as having only temporarily delegated his powers to Ms Plavsic. Moreover, even if Mr Karadzic chooses not to stand for re-election to the presidency – he has issued conflicting signals in the last week, but must make a final announcement by next Thursday – it is evident that by hook or by crook he intends to retain as much political influence as possible in the Bosnian Serb arena.

The Group of Seven leading industrial countries, plus Russia, issued an ultimatum to Mr Karadzic at the weekend, saying he must resign all public posts immediately or face the reimposition of sanctions on the Bosnian Serb republic. However, even Mr Karadzic's departure might not change Bosnian Serb attitudes, as Ms Plavsic is just as opposed as Mr Karadzic to the Dayton accord and just as determined to prevent the reunification of Bosnia.

In the southern city of Mostar, partitioned by war into Muslim and Croat sectors, voters cast ballots yesterday to elect a unified city council. However, rival nationalist Muslim and Croat parties appeared likely to pick up most votes, making the task of uniting the city as difficult as ever.



Ready to be counted: Mongolian nomads waiting to vote outside a polling station in Delegerhaan County in Hentii province, 150 miles east of the capital, Ulan Bator, yesterday for the third multi-party elections in the country since it abandoned communism in 1990. Photograph: Greg Baker / AP

## Bombers fail to blow president off course

Tony Barber talks to Kiro Gligorov (right) about Macedonia's struggle for stability

It was a demanding schedule for a man of 78: a flight to Strasbourg, a speech at the Council of Europe's headquarters and a press conference, followed by a diplomatic reception and a newspaper interview.

The fact that President Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia took it all in his sprightly stride illustrates the extraordinary resilience of a man who, less than nine months ago, was the target of an assassination attempt that left him with severe head injuries and caused many people to agonise over his country's future. Speaking to the *Independent*, Mr Gligorov said he could not be absolutely

confident that the Macedonian authorities would ever discover who was behind the car bomb that exploded in Skopje on 3 October 1995 along the president's normal route to work.

But, he said: "The actual attackers were not important. The most important thing was that those who were behind it did not realise their objectives."

These aims, said Mr Gligorov, were to prevent Macedonia from achieving permanent political stability, from improving its relations with neighbouring countries and from entering mainstream European institutions as an internationally recognised independent state.

The car bomb exploded at a time when Macedonia was poised for major breakthroughs in its relations with Greece and rump Yugoslavia.

"But I wouldn't just mention those two points. After that, Macedonia became a member of all the important and relevant European organisations. We joined the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe, and we signed Nato's Partnership for Peace."

Mr Gligorov would not elaborate on his remarks, but the strong implication was that some political forces – external or internal – were determined

to sabotage his efforts to secure Macedonia's entry into the international community on the terms available in October 1995. In respect of Greece, these terms required Mr Gligorov to change Macedonia's flag and constitution so that it no longer pressed the Greek government's territorial claim to the northern Greek province of Macedonia.

At the time, the most vehement opposition to this compromise was coming from militant emigre groups in Australia and North America, some of whom dream of a Greater Macedonian state with borders touching the Aegean Sea – including land that currently belongs to Greece. These groups denounced Mr Gligorov's deal with Greece as "treason to the Macedonian nation", but there has been no clear evidence to link them to radical nationalists in domestic Macedonian politics to the assassination attempt.

It is a measure of Mr Gligorov's personal contribution to Macedonia's stability that, upon bearing of the car bomb, politicians and commentators across the Balkans instantly expressed fears for his country's survival in its present form.

Mr Gligorov said that the real threats to Balkan stability came from two other quarters: Bosnia

and the Serbian province of Kosovo, scene of a prolonged struggle between the majority Albanian population and their Serbian rulers. "Peace in Bosnia has not been cemented, while on the other hand the Kosovo problem is still open. Together, these two factors may bring about the destabilisation of the whole region," he said.

Macedonia, whose population of 2 million includes more than 400,000 ethnic Albanians, was particularly concerned about an influx of Albanians from Kosovo and Albania itself.

Mr Gligorov said: "Many have found work in Macedonia and are seeking citizenship, and among them are people with radical ideas, referring to calls for a Greater Albania incorporating Albania, Kosovo and western Macedonia. Commenting on recent agitation for an Albanian-language university in Macedonia, he noted that primary and secondary education was already available in Albanian and promised to establish two Albanian-language teacher training colleges in the future.

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£5,000	4.25%	–	3.40%
<b>Bonus Builder (Monthly)††</b>			
£100,000+	5.85%	–	4.68%
£50,000	5.35%	–	4.28%
£20,000	5.15%	–	4.12%
£10,000	4.65%	–	3.72%
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£50,000	4.75%	–	3.80%
£20,000	4.25%	–	3.40%
£10,000	3.75%	–	3.00%
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£50,000	4.60%	4.70%	3.48%
£20,000	3.75%	4.23%	3.32%
£10,000	3.65%	3.71%	2.92%
£5,000	3.20%	3.25%	2.56%
£2,500	2.35%	2.38%	1.88%
<b>Flexible Savings Account (Annually)</b>			
£50,000+	3.40%	–	2.72%
£20,000	3.15%	–	2.52%
£10,000	3.00%	–	2.40%
£5,000	2.50%	–	2.00%
£2,500	2.30%	–	1.84%
£500*	2.10%	–	1.68%
<b>Current Account</b>			
£10,000+	1.00%	1.00%	0.80%
£500-£9,999	0.50%	0.50%	0.40%
£1-£499	0.09%	0.09%	0.07%
<b>Trustee Deposit (Annually)</b>			
£50,000+	4.75%	–	3.80%
£25,000	4.25%	–	3.40%
£10,000	3.75%	–	3.00%
£5,000	3.25%	–	2.60%
<b>Tax Exempt Charities (Annually)</b>			
£25,000+	4.25%	–	–
£10,000	3.75%	–	–
£1	3.00%	–	–
<b>Platinum and Flexi-TESSA (Annually)</b>			
(2nd issue)			
Platinum-TESSA (from £10,000)	5.10% TAX FREE*		
Flexi-TESSA (from £1,000)	5.25% TAX FREE*		

\*The minimum balance for customers aged under 23 is £100. The minimum balance for all other customers is £500. A rate of 0.10% Gross will be paid on any balance that temporarily falls below these minimum balance levels and the Account may be closed. \*Without UK income tax deducted. \*\*Annual return if monthly interest payments remain in the account. \*Assuming rate of income tax at 20%. \*\*Including a 0.5% bonus for 1996 where no withdrawals have been made. Interest will be payable net of the applicable rate of income tax (which may be reclaimed by HM Revenue & Customs) or gross, subject to the required registration. CAR and net rates are illustrative only and have been rounded to two decimal places. Rates may vary but are correct at the time of going to press. FOR INFORMATION. Details of interest rates paid on other accounts are available from any Britannia branch. You may be unsure as to whether your existing account is the best one for you. If so, please call into your local branch where we will be happy to explain the various schemes in detail.

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## Slovenia finds a friend in its attempt to join Nato

ADRIAN BRIDGE  
Central Europe Correspondent

In the month in which it celebrated the fifth anniversary of independence, the former Yugoslav republic of Slovenia has received a strong boost for its attempt to join Nato from its neighbouring Austria.

Although Austria itself is neutral, the country's Defence Minister, Werner Fasslabend said Slovenia had now joined Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in the central European group set to be the first to join the Western military alliance when it expands, probably in three to four years.

Mr Fasslabend made his remarks following a series of meetings with defence officials, including Defence Secretary William Perry, in the United States. Although they have not been officially confirmed as reflecting White House think-

ing, they are in line with growing Western support for the Slovenian cause.

They also cap a flurry of activity this month which has seen Slovenia sign association agreements with the European Union and its defence wing, the Western European Union.

"Slovenia is a very strong candidate for Nato," a diplomatic source in Brussels said. "Over the past five years it has successfully introduced economic and democratic reforms and as a small state, it would actually be easier to integrate than some of the larger ones."

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# Defence must live on a smaller slice of the pie

**A**n Irish terrorist bomb explodes at the Quebec barracks. Questions ensue. Where were the Army's security patrols and why weren't they stepped up during what ought to be, after Manchester, a period of the highest alert? Why is the much-vaunted participation of the Security Service in the "war against terrorism" showing such little result? There is a question for the Home Secretary, Michael Howard. But he, never one to restrain himself when an opportunity for coarse intra-party politicking presents itself, is dashing off to allege it is somehow all Europe's fault. It's pretty rich to hear other countries being lectured by a British government minister whose proven ineffectiveness in excluding IRA terrorists from the United Kingdom has been unfortunately demonstrated in successive recent outrages.

Yet so far no one has asked a most pertinent question: The mortar was fired in Osnabrück. What exactly is it that 4 Armoured Brigade is doing in Germany? Presumably it is no longer guarding the Fulda Gap. To respond that the British Army remains in Germany because of Nato obligations will just about do as a holding answer but fails to address a wider point. The British Defence Establishment is still too big, too far-flung, too ambitious. Whatever the precise shape of the Armed Forces in the early 21st century they are not shrinking fast enough—in

terms of what British foreign policy requires or what can be afforded given taxing and spending priorities at home. There is a strong case, therefore, for William Waldegrave and his Treasury boss Kenneth Clarke to return to the Ministry of Defence for savings. Yes, the last defence review is less than two years old and yes, overnight savings in a capital-intensive arena like defence are well-nigh impossible. None the less, whoever the Secretary for Defence is, the job is the same. It is managing decline.

The incumbent, Michael Portillo, was sent to Defence to expiate his sin against Mr Major. And now he is in political trouble. We have that on the authority of Jonathan Aitken who yesterday accused Conservative colleagues of using the sale and lease back of Ministry of Defence married quarters as a rod to heat the young pretender's back. It's difficult to muster much sympathy for Mr Portillo. His cowards last year, his jingoistic absurdities at successive party conferences mark his card unfavourably. If the Redwoods have now moved against him, he deserves it. But on the broad question of breaking up the property empire controlled by the MoD he must be right, in the longer run.

Yet if he is right in terms of the big picture, the way he has gone about selling off the estate looks both grasping and callous. Service families are being plunged into deep uncertainty about



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their future accommodation. This is an example of the dogmatic theorising about management and organisations that has come to be accepted as the norm in Whitehall. Organisations, American gurus used to assert (before the real world experience of firms showed they were wrong), should "stick to their knitting". Applied in simple-minded fashion to the MoD this has been taken to mean all tasks deemed unrelated to fighting and defending should be hived off, privatised or otherwise junked. But did the gurus ever wonder if there was a connection between soldiers' courage and loyalty

and official treatment of their dependants? It now emerges, contrary to what Mr Major has said, that the MoD is giving no guarantees to service families about where they will live after the developers take over. This policy has much in common with the much-hyped private finance initiative. The Government garners a capital sum, though thanks to sweeteners it will turn out to be less than the headline sum. But what happens later when the new owners seek to raise rents? What are the revenue consequences for the MoD? The fact that additional money is politically vital this year has ensured

that this kind of deal has not been scrutinised properly in terms of its general benefit to the public revenues. Anyone who thinks the Treasury is a bastion of probity in public spending should examine the accounts for 1995-96 and 1996-97 from the perspective of 10 years' hence. Unfortunately by then Sir Terry Burns and his cronies will have taken and hauling them before the Public Accounts Committee will do little good.

The Tory MPs who have taken against Mr Portillo are not, needless to say, exercised by worries about money. Nor do they really care for tenants. These selfsame MPs did not, let's recall, raise a single voice in favour of tenant consultation when the right to buy for local authority and housing association tenants was introduced or subsequently the Government moved to wrest entire estates away from their public-sector owners. Their concern is with dismantling a Great Symbol of the Nation. Defence is, for some Tories a totemic issue. This is evident in the past weekend's nonsense about delegations of beribboned generals and senior ministers failing to visit the Somme. Lady Thatcher's knee jerked.

On the surface these Tory symbolists and Michael Portillo have much in common: the Armed Forces, past and present, are an indispensable element in the project of English or Unionist nationalist revival. But Mr Portillo knows just how much defence costs and

how it cannot escape the scrutiny of effectiveness and efficiency which has been applied with such rigour to other blocks of public spending. The Ministry of Defence is, truth to tell, as much part of the welfare state as the Department of Social Security; historically welfare and warfare owe much to one another. A Tory party claiming any consistency or accomplishment in managing public money has no choice but to subject the diminishing claims of the defence state to continuous and sharp scrutiny.

## A new end for the fat cats' tale

**A**s PG Wodehouse might have put it, what the deuce is a chap to do without a chap to pour his Darjeeling and iron his *Independent*? It's a question corporate chieftains and City millionaires have increasingly been asking themselves. In a world of personal trainers and style counsellors it surely follows that personal services ought once again to be provided at home. But that puts a premium on Hudson and Mrs Bridges and they are playing the market. Buck House faces a kitchen drain. Perhaps it's the beginning of a jobs boom—the more fat cats, the more people needed to squash their fleas. The University of Luton is even now preparing a BA in Jeevesian Studies.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Parliament suffers from MPs' failings

**Sir:** The real danger posed by Anthony Bennis' excellent expose of the *de facto* weakness of Parliament ("A day in the death of the Commons", 25 June) is a temptation to find alternative mechanisms of democratic power.

Parliamentary procedures are not the problem. It is the quality of our MPs and the impoverished narrowness of political ideas they represent that must be addressed. Politicians are now widely regarded as cynical, opportunistic and unprincipled but we only get the MPs and the political parties we vote for. And we only vote on the progressively narrow Blair-Major agenda currently debated in the public forum.

Parliamentary democracy was won after momentous struggles by movements like the Chartists' campaign. Many lives were expended (in both the acute and chronic senses) in achieving this cherished aim. Movements like that of the Suffragettes fought to optimise the extent of constitutional democracy, and today corresponding struggles in less developed nations win the sympathy and support of many people in Britain.

It would be utter folly to allow the inadequacy of our current MPs to cause us to lose faith in Parliamentary supremacy.

**Dr GARY SLAPPER**

*Law School*

*Staffordshire University*

*Stoke-on-Trent*

**Sir:** You complain about our poorly attended, fussy and ineffective House of Commons with its apparently supine attitude to the Executive. But is this surprising? What possible enthusiasm could MPs have for their job when their positive work is not reported, they are portrayed as crooks, careerists or timeservers and they are obliged to accept without question a salary that would prompt industrial action were it to be imposed upon the occupants of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

If Parliament is working flat out considering a large number of public bills, the media says that we have too much legislation. If the agenda is thinner and MPs devote their time to Select Committees and constituency work, we are told that the Government of the day has run out of ideas.

You imply that this state of affairs is related to the Conservative Party. The actions of Mr Blair in summarily changing devolution policy give the lie to that. We do need reform, but it will require more than legislation to change the attitude of political leaders to Parliament.

**NICHOLAS KENT**

*National Secretary*

*Tory Reform Group*

*London SW1*

**Sir:** I was a member of the Procedure Committee 1975-79: the Procedure Report of 1978, which recommended establishing a structure of Departmental Select Committees, hoped that it would

be the House as a whole to exercise effective control and stewardship over Ministers and the expanding bureaucracy of the modern state for which they are answerable, and to make the decisions of Parliament and Government more responsive to the wishes of the electorate.

Many believe that the trend now is to the contrary, as illustrated by the increasing scope and impact of



"negative" Statutory Instruments and of EC legislation. The former are rarely debated at all, and even debates on the latter can only advise Ministers, who then take legislative decisions in secret.

Thus, the advance of executive authority has continued since the 1978 report, which said that the working of the constitution was, even then, "weighted in favour of the Government to a degree which raises widespread anxiety".

**NIGEL SPEARING MP**  
(Newham South, Lab)  
*House of Commons*  
*London SW1*

### Reducing Russia's visa queues

**Sir:** You recently published letters from three of your readers (15, 19, 21 June) complaining about the visa service at our Moscow Embassy. I was most concerned to learn of their criticism which I take very seriously.

I offer every assurance that we

wish to encourage as many business

people and tourists alike, to visit

the UK. It is in our interests to do

so, and provided that an applicant

satisfies the requirements of the

Immigration Rules (and 96 per

cent do) all our efforts are

directed to that end.

Moscow, however, is now our

largest visa issuing post in the

world; and with an average annual

increase in demand of 25 per cent

in each of the last three years, our

ability to provide the space and

staffing levels necessary has been

under great strain. June and July,

being the busiest months, create

queue problems for applicants, but

we simply cannot accommodate the 500 to 600 applicants a day inside the existing Embassy compound. I take a personal interest in our Moscow operation. I visited Moscow last December and approved plans to enlarge and improve the old premises at a cost of £700,000. The renovated offices opened on 13 May and provide waiting space for 160 persons and new counter positions for eight visa officers (of which there are currently 17) a time.

We are always seeking to improve our visa service to Russian applicants and are looking closely to see how the length of queues and queuing times can be reduced.

**JEREMY HANLEY MP**  
*Minister of State*  
*Foreign and Commonwealth Office*  
*London SW1*

### Good relations for twin towns

**Sir:** Regarding your article (25 June) "Don't be beastly to the Germans" you will be pleased to hear that in Tonbridge, Kent, we have very good relations with Germany.

On the 50th anniversary of the war, we and our twin town, Hohenstaufen, each set up a 50 Year Peace Fund from which money has been available to give young people from families of limited means the opportunity to participate in twinning visits.

In addition, on alternate years, we in Tonbridge are given all the profits from our twin town's

money-making projects, and combined with our own profits, we are able to give worthwhile causes in our area. In 1995, the magnificent sum of £1,400 was shared among local groups.

Perhaps if more towns twinned with German towns and villages there would be a greater understanding between the nations and the editors of certain shabby newspapers might realise the damage they cause with their twisted sense of humour.

**MARJORIE J STEWART**

*Tonbridge, Kent*

**IBM produces highest revenues**

**Sir:** David Usborne alleges (report, 3 June) that Electronic Data Systems (EDS) is "the largest computer systems management and consulting enterprise in the world." You're off the mark. IBM is the largest services company in the world, not EDS.

In 1995, for example, IBM's services revenues were \$12.7bn. versus the \$12.4bn for EDS to which the report refers. But the gap is actually wider in favour of IBM.

EDS's revenues include some \$3.9bn of General Motors' revenues, while IBM's do not include some \$3.5bn. Furthermore, if one were to add IBM's maintenance business of over \$7 bn, IBM's total global services would be almost double those of EDS.

**BOB DJURDJEVIC**

*President*

*Annex Research*

*Phoenix, Arizona*

### No logic in war crime accusation

**Sir:** The United Nations war crimes tribunal in the Hague has accused Radovan Karadzic and his military commander, General Ratko Mladic, of being "war criminals" ("Karadzic forced out of Bosnian elections", 28 June). While

welcoming justice for all of the victims of the Bosnian conflict, it is difficult to understand the logic behind these particular accusations.

Although the Serbs undoubtedly committed the majority of war crimes in Bosnia the Croats and Bosnian Muslims are not completely blameless. What's more, except on grounds of political expediency, how is it that the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, who is surely the one who pulled the strings behind the conflict, is now absent from the list of indicted "war criminals". Now that Milosevic has become useful to the West presumably war crimes charges levelled against him at the height of the conflict are to be quietly forgotten.

Perhaps the only manner in which to understand these inconsistencies is to look back to the post-war Nuremberg trials where "war crimes" were only defined by the victors as those committed by the enemy and losers.

**TARAS KUZIO**

*Research Fellow*

*Centre for Russian and East*

*European Studies*

*University of Birmingham*

### Is the academic grass greener?

**Sir:** Duncan Morgan (report, 27 June) compares, unfavourably, his remuneration for marking exam scripts to that of his plumber and washing-machine repair man.

What he forgets is that they are almost certainly self-employed, whereas I believe very few teachers are. The self-employed aren't entitled to sick pay, holiday pay or unemployment benefit; they have to buy all their own training or certification, pension and insurance, and they only get paid for the hours they actually work.

It would be very difficult to earn the £1000 he suggests in 40 hours in such jobs. The reality is likely to be two or three different jobs each day, only the time on the customer's premises being chargeable.

Permanent teachers are also in the fortunate position of having a job from which it is almost impossible to get the sack except for gross misconduct—this must be worth a lot in these days when most people (employees and self-employed) don't have anything like such security.

**LOIS WAKEMAN**

*Lymne Regis*

*Dorset*

*Sir:* Does Hamish MacRae have

any evidence for the claim ("Can we afford holidays?", 28 June) that university lecturers have long

hours work a week) the even

harder work of research begins

immediately. I suspect that

university lecturers have shorter

holidays than most.

**GALEN STRAWSON**

*Jesus College, Oxford*

### Football for all

**Sir:** Germaine Greer ("Greer on Gaza: In his lumpy shorts, the idiot savant who won us all over", 28 June) misses the point when she portrays the partisanship of football supporters as male vs female. For all interested English persons last Wednesday, it was England vs Germany; team vs

team. It is an injustice to say that the female supporters in the crowd at home are no more than parasites feeding off the thick air of testosterone. I challenge Ms Greer to sit in a crowd at Wembley after years of being a football supporter and not to feel as though her next breath were dependent upon the next move on the field.

The relationship between team and supporters is the embodiment of our football culture, and without a doubt it exists regardless of gender.

I am sure I speak for every female football supporter when I say that I am astonished at the insinuation that I should be unable to experience the ecstasy, the desolation and the whole spectrum of emotions in between, simply because I am a woman.

**MIRANDA JEFFREY**

## analysis

# If you're hip, you must be Irish

No longer need they mask their roots: the Irish in Britain are proud of their origins. By Jack O'Sullivan

**A**mid general hand-wringing over the IRA's return to violence, you'll hear not a word from one group of Irish people. There are millions of them, but they haven't been on television discussing Friday's mortar attack on an army barracks. No one would even have thought to ask their opinions.

The Irish in Britain are politically invisible. They have tried to stay out of the Troubles: it was not they who blew people up; the bombers came almost exclusively from the Republic and Northern Ireland. And since the ceasefire, they – unlike Irish-Americans – have played a minimal role in shaping the peace. When outrages occur, John Hume, Ian Paisley, Sir Patrick Mayhew and John Bruton all make their predictable comments. But not this community in our midst that knows so much, feels so much and says so little. Like the Arabs in Israel proper, they are in every town; but they remain locally silent.

It isn't difficult to understand such difference. They have not always felt welcome. The witty Irish gentleman has long been acceptable in the drawing room, but his countrymen have often been less well-regarded.

The Duke of Wellington famously summed up English disdain when asked: "Sir, is it true you were born in Ireland?" The Iron Duke replied: "Being born in a stable doesn't make you a horse."

Popular images of the Irish man have portrayed him as a foolish, idle figure of fun. One Victorian contributor to Punch described him as "a creature maniacally between the Gorilla and the Negro." This community, which has seen Catholicism in Britain fully tolerated only since the 1830s and Irishness usually regarded as suspect, is reluctant to generate controversy.

The tide of hostility and the several miscarriages of justice



Gaelic celebration: a St Patrick's Day parade past the town hall was just one manifestation of Manchester's Irishness during its first annual Irish festival in March

Peter Greenfield

that followed Birmingham and Guildford pub bombings in 1974 served as a reminder to keep heads down. Twenty-five years of conflict in Northern Ireland did little to challenge perceptions of the Irish as irrational and violent; Ian Paisley's performance only compounded the problem by making Ulster Protestants additionally subject to prejudices

**The signs said no  
Irish need apply.  
My parents had all  
the prejudice**

against which Catholics alone had previously laboured.

But in this British community, whose size the census does not even measure (the best guess is 1 million Irish-born, 8 million of Irish descent), something extraordinary is happening. A remarkable surge in cultural self-confidence is taking place. We are seeing nothing short of the greening of

England, as the Irish in Britain set aside a traditional low profile, moving out of the ghetto, beyond enclaves of clubs and pubs and into the mainstream.

But old attitudes have been transformed. Manchester has not taken its anger out on the Irish community. Perhaps this is understandable: 20 per cent of the population has Irish roots. Many of the emergency workers interviewed after the bomb had Irish accents: the man trapped in a tower for three days was named Danny O'Neill.

But an important reason may be a huge change in perceptions. Suddenly, Irishness is hip. "Irish culture is seductive. It has become a signifier for hedonism with soul," says Frank Cottrell-Boyce, a former scriptwriter for *Coronation Street*. "There was a decisive moment during the World Cup, when Ireland was there and England wasn't, when people came out as Irish who hadn't been before. Irishness has fostered a sense of modernity."

Some, particularly the unskilled, have had problems. Shane McGowan (late of the Pogues) sings of the recession-hit building worker: "I'm buggered to demolition/And I haven't got a penny/To wander the dark streets of London." But many of the "Ryanair generation" have lived well, flitting back and forth on cheap airfares, using Britain as a staging post before heading on to Europe and the United States. No longer are the Irish the poor relations.

The second generation, those born of the Fifties' immigrants, is particularly important. Better educated than their parents, they know how Britain works. They sound, in their desire to forge a special identity, like confident young British English as Bobby Charlton, his traditional Claddagh ring, trademark of the young, is the only outward sign of his origins.

"It seems to be OK to be Irish," says Keegan, 30, a graduate, whose father was a labourer. "It used to be that the only place you could go was to old men's clubs down Stockport Road. But now there are so many places and your English friends come too. It's really in your face."

"My Dad came here 40 years

ago and he worked his bollocks off. There were signs that no blacks or Irish need apply – my

parents went through all the prejudice. Just as Muslims have tapped into an international culture, while dropping their parents' yearning for a return to the homeland, so this second generation is at home here while still choosing to be Irish. It is, after all, this generation that has supplied the key players for the successful Irish Republic team. Stars such as Liverpool-born Jason McAteer and Aston Villa's Cockey mid-fielder Andy Townsend would have died for an England place, but they didn't decide it was cooler to be Irish. Two decades ago, it would have been unthinkable for them to spurn the flag of St George.

Back in O'Shea's, Denis Keegan is one of many Mancunians whose parents were born in Ireland. Sounding as if he is talking to an old friend, he says: "I used to say I was English. I would not say my parents were Irish, but now I say that I'm of Irish descent."

Jim Bryan, 36, a Manchester electrician, has even more tenuous links with Ireland. His father left Co. Galway as a baby nearly 70 years ago and has never returned. "I went back for the first time last year, met the relations. I loved it. Nice and slow, not like rushing at 80 miles an hour here in Manchester. We're keeping in touch now – exchanging Christmas cards. There's a bit of Irish in me, I think. When you come back, you realise you understand yourself a little bit better."

This tendency for the second and third generation to continue to feel Irish confounds many sociologists. The Irish were expected to assimilate quickly. This has, after all, apparently happened to the oldest Victorian Irish settlement, on Merseyside. Few in Liverpool would now call themselves Irish. However, most give themselves a local identity

– Liverpudlian or Scouse – rather than the usual national one. And all the characteristics of Liverpudianism – verboseness, Catholicism, high value placed on family, irreverence for the Protestant work ethic – are vestiges of their rural, pre-industrial ancestors. Liverpudianism seems, in short, a mask for Irishness.

The newer Irish communities used a single mask: Catholicism. They attended Catholic schools, where, according to Mary Hickman's authoritative new study of the Irish in Britain\*, they learned to define themselves as Catholic rather than as Irish. Their public rituals – confession and communion on Saturday, Mass on Sundays, a miniature wedding dress at seven for the girls' First Communion – distinguished them denominational but not ethnically.

Now, as the power of the Catholic Church wanes and Irishness becomes less of a social impediment, this community appears to be seeking a more secular expression of difference. They are more self-aware: there are now popular degree courses in Irish Studies. Indeed, some university courses are over-subscribed, with many non-Irish students trying to gain a place. There is a campaign for the 2001 census to produce an accurate figure of how many Irish people live in Britain.

It is also worth knowing what they think about Northern Ireland. "No one agrees with violence or people getting hurt," says Sean McGuire. "People are keen on a united Ireland, but what happens over there does not directly impinge on us. There is no urgency to stand up and be counted. Peace is all that people want."

In Britain, Irish people discuss Northern Ireland among themselves, but it's such a touchy subject, that it would take someone with an awful lot of balls to tell the people of Britain what they should do. People would be afraid that if they started talking about politics, they would be accused of being IRA sympathisers.

"As the peace process got going, people started to talk more freely. I think now they will go back into their shells."

There is, however, no sign that the revival in Irish culture will wane. "This is not an anti-British thing," says McGuire. "It's Irish blood running through the veins. Something to be proud of, not to be forgotten."

\* *Religion, Class and Identity*, by Mary J Hickman, Avebury Press.



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## Papa! Let the ads take a back seat

**H**ow do you visualise the typical TV car commercial?

I visualise it as Tom Conti falling off the top of a skyscraper, landing smiling on his feet, saying "Handspring durch Technik" and walking off into the sunset with a beautiful girl.

The only song is that I don't seem to have included a car in the ad, but otherwise it represents a fair cross-section of car clichés. In fact, I sometimes think that the makers of TV car ads must be at their wit's end when it goes on.

They seem to have tried everything to make their client's car seem glamorous and romantic, yet trustworthy and reliable, safe yet sexy.

They have sent cars to the end of the world, they have brought cars back from the ends of the earth, they have filled them with exotic models, they have taken the exotic models out and put actors in, and made them enact little stories, tiny playlets, in which as often as not a French girl gets to say "Papa".

Very occasionally they have even taken the actors out and put real people in cars in real situations like a fast-moving traffic jam. Recently they have started getting silly as when, in the case of the Renault Megane ads, they started making the car talk. When a car starts talking in an ad, I think we are running out of ideas. It only remains for a car to call another car "Papa".

People who make car commercials must now sit around at meetings and say things like: "There is absolutely nothing left to do in car commercials unless you want to have the car fly through the air!"

And somebody else says: "That's been done, too."

"Well," says somebody else, "we could always as a last resort take the mickey out of car ads."

"How?"

"Well, sort of deconstruct them by doing a piss-take of them. Look, you could start off a car commercial with an exotic location, you know, then a shot of an iguana, twisty mountain road, glamorous drivers, funk music over, theo a

ads by sending up car ads. At the end of the commercial the only person visible is not a glamorous actor but a cleaner with a brush, sweeping round the glittering car, and nice touch this – roughly whistling the music we've just heard faded down on the funky mouth harp."

Of course, the voice-over doesn't end by saying "The car says it all", because that might remind people of the Renault Megane which seems to have cornered the market in talking cars. So the voice-over says: "The car has it all".

But otherwise it seems to be the first honest car ad, because what it is saying in effect is, "WE know and YOU know that car ads are all cosmetic, so we are going to be the first to come out and admit it and just concentrate on the car!"

This message is a slightly dishonest one in that the ad doesn't tell us anything about the car at all except its name and what it looks like – nothing about the performance or how many people can get in it or whether it is licensed to

have weddings celebrated in it. No, this is in effect the first car commercial about other car commercials.

"This is an ad for the Mitsubishi Carisma," it is saying. "Why should you buy a Carisma? Because Mitsubishi are the kind of people who don't need to make TV ads. That's why we made this ad. To tell you that we're not making it. Don't believe us. Believe what the car says. Not that it talks..."

Where do they go next? If we now have an ad saying we don't need ads, where do the ad boys go from here? Will we have a sunset, a car driving up, two glamorous people getting out of the new Dippin' Oregon Hatchback and one saying to the other, "You know, I didn't believe the car commercials until I drove the Oregon"? Or will we see an actor sitting in a new car saying, "You know, I could have made a lot of money doing this ad. But I preferred to keep the car instead?"

I don't know. But I shall be interested to find out.

Well, moderately interested.



**Miles Kington**

voice comes in saying, "We don't need all this junk! The car says it all!"

"And then what?"

"Well, you get the camera to pull back. You see that the car is not actually in the countryside, it's on a stand in front of a film of the countryside. You put out the lights, fade down the funky music and you're left with a studio in which everything is fake and tawdry – except the car!"

And now this has actually been done. I am sketching a description there of the new TV commercial for the Mitsubishi Carisma, which not only breaks the barrier of the spelling of the word charisma, but breaks the mould of car

مكتبة من الأصل

## the commentators

## Le Pen skilfully stokes the nationalist fire

French politicians, of both left and right, don't know what to do about the racist appeal of the Front National

While the European football competition was generating a wave of irrational anti-German feeling in the British tabloid press last week, France was having a similar but more serious experience. Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the *Front National*, laid into the national football team, saying it was artificial to get players from abroad and baptise them as French, particularly as most of them either failed to sing the *Marseillaise* or appeared to mouth words that didn't accord with the actual text.

Indeed, while the players are all French citizens, one was born in Ghana, another has dual Portuguese/French nationality and others have Italian, Algerian or Tunisian parents or can claim Spanish or even Armenian grandparents. As for singing, the captain said that he preferred bunting: a second disapproved of the *Marseillaise* because it was a war song; and a third said that as he was only capable of singing Basque ditties in the team bus.

Football in France has been like boxing in the US – the newest immigrant group uses it as a method of climbing the ladder. By 1940, 25 players of foreign origin had represented France. Football was so weakly rooted that it needed an infusion of talent from abroad. Since 1945 this foreign

legion has grown and accounts for 15 per cent of French professional players. The inflow into French teams has mirrored successive waves of immigration: Polish, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and African. With this history, football is less the national game in France than it is in England, Italy or Spain. The French establishment sees it, along with other sports, as a powerful instrument of integration. M. Le Pen, therefore, was not criticising a new turn of events but a familiar situation. Mainstream political leaders, each one of whom fears him and his party, unanimously condemned him.

M. Le Pen made his comments within a few days of having obtained a signal victory over the French press. Using the courts, he forced *Le Monde* and others to give him a "right of reply" in response to its description of the *Front National* as a political party of the "extreme right". M. Le Pen objected; he was anxious to tell readers of *Le Monde* that the *Front National* was neither racist, nor xenophobic nor fascist. It was neither of the right nor of the left; it was *le parti de la France*. In fact, the difference between plain right wing and the extreme or far right lies in attitudes to race. John Redwood recently defined Conservative ideology as believing that the state should be at once limited in its role

and duty and yet strong in its chosen tasks, particularly in enforcing a strict moral law. Mr Redwood's formulation made no mention of preserving Britishness as an objective. When ethnic issues are brought into consideration, right wing becomes extreme right. Strong nationalistic sentiments such as Michael Portillo expresses are a step along the path. Then as nationalism becomes racism, it becomes far right or extreme right.

In his right of reply, M. Le Pen was engaging in a great pretence. Since 1973, the programme of the *Front*

*National* has centred on the survival of a French identity refined, as it believes, through 4,000 years of European culture, 20 centuries of Christianity, 40 kings and two centuries of the Republic. One enters into French nationality, says M. Le Pen, by "blood received, or blood split" – chauvinism, after all, goes back to the blind admiration for his country shown by Napoleon's soldier, Nicolas Chauvin.

In practice, the *Front National* has been ambiguous in its public statements, being, in Alexander Pope's words, "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike". Thus M. Le Pen last March: "Only the people is capable of sensing, by a sort of biological intuition, the mortal danger that blights its future." In this context, "biological" is a word from a racist vocabulary. Or a colleague of M. Le Pen: "We are going straight towards an ethnic war and that war will be total." In Bosnia or in France? Or another who scarcely fudges at all: "The nationalists are treated like dogs or pariahs. One will only be done with this situation by reacting vigorously. One must kill one's enemy. The Israeli right has killed Rabin and won the elections. It doesn't mean that it is necessary to kill Chirac, but we must stop having a position of respect for consideration." These are alarming sentiments, all

the more so in light of M. Le Pen's success in the recent presidential election, when he attracted 15 per cent of the votes. The mainstream parties fear that if this share of the poll were to be repeated in the 1998 elections for the National Assembly, where the *Front National* is unrepresented, then M. Le Pen could hold the balance in a hung Parliament. As a result, some French politicians, led by François Leotard, met last month to attempt the construction of a "republican front", in which the mainstream parties, both of left and right, would put forward only one candidate in contests where the *Front National* has a chance of winning. These proposals have been met with scepticism. One reaction is that one should notabolish the *Front National* because only a small proportion of its electors are extreme and because, anyway, its very weight already gives it a legitimacy.

Thus we see how the clever, aggressive, dangerous M. Le Pen makes progress. I wonder what he would be if he was asked about the prospects for a party similar to his in the UK. Would he say: "A hopeless case: not enough social distress, too little ethnic tension, only sporadic bair of foreigners, tradition of tolerance too strong? Or would he respond, "Yes, promising situation"?

The welfare state has grown both inefficient and expensive. Labour has begun to offer tentative proposals for its reform. But radical changes are needed

## How to open the benefit trap

By Frank Field

The first fruits of Labour's review of social security, which were revealed last week by Chris Smith, stretch the limits of action within the present system of taxation and social security. There are two compelling reasons why radical reform isn't merely an option but a necessity for Labour.

First, the hard truth the country has to face is that more, not less, needs to be spent on welfare. Yet under existing rules taxpayers are understandably reluctant to pay more. And second, the social security budget is growing at a rate – twice that at which the economy has been growing – which, unchecked, will financially derail the next Labour government.

A moment's reflection tells why more needs to be spent on welfare. Working lives have shortened and decades now are spent in retirement. An adequate retirement income depends on saving more now.

Paradoxically the message of spending more on welfare comes at a time when the welfare budget is already growing like topsy. Each year the budget overruns by £3bn only to overrun again by a similar amount in the following year. The social security budget is not only by far and away the largest of all government budgets, but is increasing faster than any of the others. To embellish former mandarin Sir Geoffrey Holland's observation, other departments are left to scavenge the scraps that fall from the table upon which welfare feasts. The uncontrollability of this budget increasingly makes prioritising government business difficult. It wasn't for nothing that Aneurin Bevan remarked that priorities were the language of socialism.



How can a future Labour government break free of the curse of DSS expenditure? By addressing that question Labour begins the big debate of the Millennium. It involves recasting the relationship between the state and the individual, of switching the balance away from centralism towards other forms of collective association, as well as re-drawing the border between the public and private domain.

At the centre of today's welfare lurks a cancer that has been nurtured by the Tories. While expenditure on insurance provision since 1979 has risen by under 30 per cent, means test costs have soared by 300 per

cent. Means tests trample upon those basic instincts that help to sustain civilised progress. Means-tested help depends on low income and small savings. Such benefits therefore penalise work, savings and honesty.

In their craving for extending means-tested assistance, the Tories have launched the most significant attack ever by government on both the individual's and the nation's natural drive for self-improvement. And they have implemented their approach with a ruthlessness that the leaders of the old discredited Soviet regime would have admired.

Disengaging from this welfare nightmare demands wholesale reforms. Tory failure has

closed the option for limited incremental change. The hour demands the most radical reconstruction.

Labour's overriding commitment must be to begin a progressive disengagement from means-tested assistance. This cannot be achieved overnight. It will take perhaps 20 years to complete. But the first steps of that long journey need to begin with the advent of a Blair government.

Four major initiatives are required. The poor law is alive and well in Britain. Claimants for income support may gain help if they withdraw from the labour market. This final vestige of the poor law must be abolished. All claimants of

working age should be invited to think what they want to do with the rest of their lives. They should be able to use their income support payments to help achieve the next stage in their career.

Next, a new system of insurance benefits must be introduced. A new insurance corporation should be established and owned by the members themselves, and work begins on introducing two new benefits.

The Job Seekers Allowance needs replacing with insurance cover for unemployment. This new benefit would run for six months, as does the Job Seekers Allowance. The big difference is that people would qualify for benefit after 13

weeks rather than two years. As every week out of the labour market increases unemployment, this would give risk-takers an incentive to return to work with what might be a short shelf life.

Also, the partner's job would be safeguarded, as households would not be pushed into means tests where it pays most wives not to work. New jobs would become more fairly shared between those households with no workers and those with many. Similarly a new care pension is an urgent reform. Here again is an opening for the new, collectively owned but non-state insurance corporation.

Third, pension provision must be made adequate and universal.

A new pension corporation would be responsible for running the existing pension scheme, which will cover all workers. The four million workers on low earnings who currently pay nothing towards a state retirement pension would be brought within the scheme and a pension in their own right. Next, second pension coverage must also become universal for workers earning above a modest level. Those workers not in a company or a private pension scheme would be required to begin saving towards a second, funded pension.

This reform extends the existing system of compulsion so that it covers everyone and thereby does what is possible to ensure adequate retirement incomes for today's workers.

Last, the issue of fraud must also occupy the centre stage. The largest of all government budgets is under sustained attack by serious criminal fraud.

Even some with Peter Lilley's determination has yet to mount an adequate counter-fraud strategy. Here is another opening waiting to be seized. Only Labour appears ready to be tough on fraud and tough on the causes of fraud.

## ... and give people a living wage



POLLY TOYNBEE

Cheryl sews frills on petticoats, earning £10 in 10 hours. Carol, earning £2.50 an hour cleaning offices at four in the morning. Diane is paid £2 an hour cleaning in a pizza restaurant.

A minimum wage is one of the most radical policies new Labour has left, offering a real chance of escape from the benefit trap – albeit at a price. The cost of this policy is honestly assessed in a persuasive report today published by the Employment Policy Institute (*Employers and a National Wage* by Fred Bayliss).

There are a great many Cheryls, Carols and Dianes. Some 72 per cent of waitresses are paid under £3.50 an hour (Labour's presumed minimum wage rate). So are 36 per cent of textile workers. Nearly everyone paid under £3.50 is a woman part-timer, which explains the continuing chasm between men's and women's pay. (Women manual workers get only 73 per cent of male manual wages.)

Women can only afford to do these jobs because they have working partners, so when people talk anxiously about the huge growth in women's jobs compared to men's – another death blow to men's self-esteem – this is the unappealing explanation.

Against the minimum wage is politi-

cal anxiety. It is a perilous policy for Labour – redolent of the old days of the Prices and Incomes Board. For the red rose party with mobile phones, the minimum wage looks like a cloth cap and an old knapsack worn over an Armani suit. It carries the baggage of trade unionism, tainted with an anti-market crude egalitarianism.

Some economists argue that if wages went up, employers would sack many of the low-paid. How can we compete with the tiger economies if we pay our workers so much more than they pay theirs? And what about wage inflation? Wouldn't everyone scramble to keep up their differentials?

Dr Fred Bayliss, former chairman of the Employment Policy Institute, interviewed employers who would be most affected. Other surveys have questioned all employers: the Reed survey last week found 49 per cent of employers approved of a minimum wage. But those who pay above the likely minimum wage support it because they expect to clean up when more marginal businesses go to the wall. Small supermarkets, for instance, pay lower wages than big chains who mostly already pay above Labour's presumed minimum wage level.

Those most at risk are the 250,000 clothing workers, whose companies really are competing with cheap

imports. Although a minimum wage will be a blow, however, it will be of far less significance than the chill winds from abroad that the industry has faced for the past 10 years, says Bayliss. Problems in one fairly minor sector hardly justify ditching the good will it does elsewhere.

The best argument for a minimum wage is Labour's welfare-to-work strategy. A lot more people will be urged off Income Support and into work topped up with Family Credit. But without a minimum wage the state will subsidise even more marginal, lame-duck or Scrooge employers.

These days, new Labour cannot espouse many other serious methods for helping the poorest. It cannot put up benefits (and anyway that only makes the poverty trap worse). It cannot significantly redistribute income through the tax system – those days are gone. But a minimum wage, paid for in price increases (just as consumers absorbed the cost of VAT increases) is one of the best practical ways to help the poor without more welfare dependency and an unelectable tax system.

The rate would be universal but could be phased in gradually – and it

would be printed on every benefit book, posted in every post office and policed by the same pay-roll inspectors that check national insurance contributions. No exemptions or variations or added complexities, easy to understand and reviewed every year.

Some people will be shaken out of jobs. Some small employers will go to the wall. But in the main, the same jobs will still be done by the same people, if sometimes for different employers. In other words, the costs are sustainable in view of the benefits.

No doubt the Tories will represent Labour's minimum wage policy as a dangerous job-destroyer. This is a prize piece of bungling from a party that has congratulated companies for their efficiency in the widespread slashing and burning of jobs, which has left firms severely downsized, with thousands more out of work and dependent on the ever-growing social security bill.

Labour has in acknowledgement that some jobs might be affected by the introduction of a minimum wage, but it can point out, with passion, that the great majority of Cheryls, Dianes and Carols will benefit. And the clincher is that it will draw others currently trapped on state benefits back into productive employment.

## The seed that fell on bare ground

The state of my lawn, writes Michael Hutchinson, reveals that Major is soon to be put out to grass

April 9th, 1992 may have been the day that John Major won his improbable victory at the polls, but it was also the day I turned my lawn. I live in London but, like many people, dream of living in the country – something that is much easier to do while lying on the grass.

So when I moved in to my terraced house in spring 1979, I rejected this turned into a bald patch of earth which steadily grew larger. In the past, this has been successfully repaired with a sprinkling of new seed, but just as recent elections have made it impossible for the Tories to sow any new seed, the drought of 1992 did the same for my lawn.

Then there's the cherry tree. I planted this years ago as a spindly little sapling attached to a massive 2-inch pole. Seven years later, its girth is

I see no reason to doubt that my lawn has the gift of prophecy

tremendous, its blossom has been spectacular (especially after last year's summer), and its branches provide welcome shade from the sun where our baby daughter can play. But grass needs light, and the painful truth is that the majority of the lawn is no longer really grass – just as the majority of MPs are no longer Tories.

Moss from the right has met the bare earth caused by shade from the tree on the left. A small patch of grass remains in the centre near the French windows, but the word "lawn" is really no longer appropriate, just as the word "government" no longer seems appropriate to what the Tories are up to.

I wouldn't dream of chopping the tree down, but the lawn can't survive unless it goes. So perhaps I should write to Downing Street that

on Thursday 4 July, work starts to replace the vestiges of a working lawn in Sedlescombe Road with a new path paved with tiles in a tasteful shade of terracotta red.

Given that some people can do the same thing with tea leaves, sheep's entrails, and even oysters, I see no reason whatever to doubt that

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## obituaries/gazette

## Sir Gordon Cox

Sir Gordon Cox was one of the early pioneers of X-ray crystallography. He served his country with distinction both in peace and war and his exemplary concern for his younger colleagues greatly facilitated their development and professional progress.

He was the son of Ernest Henry Cox, a man of varied occupations, including that of a market gardener, which may have been responsible for his son's respect for the productive potential of soil when prudently mislabeled, and also a man of varied fortunes, including a period of bankruptcy in which the family "all managed", in a way which may have strengthened the boy's natural steadiness and fortitude.

From the City of Bath Boys' School he proceeded to Bristol University to read Physics. The commodious and well-equipped Wills Physics Laboratory was under the direction of Professor A.M. Tyndall, who was determined to make a world-class department and who succeeded brilliantly because of his nose for talented young people and his persuasive tongue.

Cox remained proud of Bristol physics throughout his life. He was early drawn to the study of the arrangement of atoms in crystals. The method

of achieving this by X-ray diffraction had been given a sound foundation by Sir William Bragg and his son Lawrence, for which they shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1915. By the mid-Twenties Lawrence had established in Manchester a research school in X-ray crystallography, mainly of minerals and metals, and his father was Director of the Davy-Faraday Laboratory at the Royal Institution where he was applying similar X-ray methods to determine structures, but with an emphasis on non-metallic and principally organic compounds.

It was to the latter of these two crystallographic meccas that the young Cox went and was assigned the task of finding how the carbon atoms in benzene, known from chemical evidence to be in a ring, were disposed. Were they arranged symmetrically, each equidistant from its two neighbours in the ring? Was that ring flat and if not was it buckled to form an armchair or boat-like structure? After some difficulties trying to keep the benzene crystalline because it is liquid at room temperature, Cox established beyond doubt that the carbon atoms were at the corners of a regular hexagon, a conclusion of considerable importance for theoretical

chemists. Many years later in Leeds he encouraged studies to discover something of the motion of those molecules in their lattice. Professor W.N. Haworth, Head of the Birmingham Chemistry Department, then engaged with E.L. Hirst on the study of the carbohydrates, was quick to see the potential of Cox's work and appointed him to his staff in 1929.

In the next decade Cox used X-ray techniques to settle many important structures including, on the organic side, that of Vitamin C which is now recognized to have a vitally important role of anti-oxidant in cellular processes; while in inorganic chemistry, and stimulated by his older colleague William Wardlaw, Cox elucidated how molecules at the corners of squares are arranged round a metal ion sitting at the centre. Without this early knowledge of the possible configurations of structures of this kind it is arguable that understanding the important role of metal ions sequestered in large biological molecules might well have been delayed, and possibly the seminal work of Max Perutz in elucidating the structure of very large molecules, which began the whole field of molecular biology, would have been postponed.

Cox had marked loyalty to

towards his native Somerset and to England and he joined the Territorial Army, being commissioned in 1936. When the Second World War came he was recruited to scientific work, becoming Superintendent of the Special Operations Executive laboratories where he was involved *inter alia* in making devices for use by our agents and the Maquis in Europe. In this quasi-secret world he met Victor (Lord) Rothschild, then in MI5, and they struck up a warm friendship which later led Rothschild, who was for 10 years Chairman of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) to recruit Cox into membership of the Department for Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) for funds to develop this method, which became of enormous world-wide importance, was turned down on the grounds that the DSIR Committee "could see no conceivable use" for it. Fascinated to know how the earth's crystalline minerals were formed, he therefore established a high pressure laboratory and links with the geochemists in Leeds.

In 1950 he left Leeds to become Secretary of the ARC. Initially he was happy, perhaps feeling closer to the earth his father had tilled. He became less

content when, as a result of the 1965 Science and Technology Act, the research councils, previously funded by the Treasury, were transferred to the Department of Education and Science, and the old Advisory Council on Scientific Policy was replaced by the Council for Scientific Policy (CSP). As a member and latterly chairman of the CSP and its successor body, the Advisory Board for the Research Councils, my working contact with Cox was renewed and I could sense his feeling of concern at what he perceived to be threat to his independence from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. When, during his retirement, Victor Rothschild, as chairman of the Government's Central Policy Review Staff (Think Tank), proposed to apply his customer/contractor relationship, Cox saw this as a major threat to the survival of the ARC and their friendship cooled markedly.

Cox married first Lucie Baker by whom he had a son Keith and a daughter Patricia, both of whose entries in *Who's Who* are on an adjacent page to his. Six years after Lucie's death he married Professor Mary Truter, a former Leeds "Pippin", and they had many happy years together during which they were



Cox: far-sighted and popular with his "Pippins". Photograph: Godfrey Argent

regular attendees at the meetings of the British Association. Characteristically, by voluntary service to the Royal Institution, Gordon Cox tried to repay his debt to that body, which he saw as the springboard for his career. For myself I shall always be grateful to have known so modest and capable a man and one so upright and entirely devoid of envy.

Fred Dalton

Ernest Gordon Cox, chemist and administrator: born Bath 24 April 1906; Chemistry Department, Birmingham University 1929-41; Professor of Inorganic and Structural Chemistry, Leeds University 1945-60; Secretary Agricultural Research Council 1960-71; FRS 1954; KBE 1964; married 1929 Lucie Baker (died 1962, one daughter), 1968 Professor Mary Truter (née Jackman); died London 23 June 1996.

T



De Santis created an unreal shimmering look for the beach scenes in *Death in Venice* (1971)

It is easy to confuse great settings with great cinematography. The film *A Month by the Lake*, which is currently showing in cinemas, has some exquisite individual images of the Lake Como region of Italy captured by the eminent cinematographer Pasqualino de Santis (who was sometimes credited as Pasquale de Santis), but this will not be remembered as one of his notable achievements as there is no compelling sense of unity or stylisation on the visual style.

However, one has only to think back on the contrasting look of such films as Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Luchino Visconti's *Morte a Venezia* ("Death in Venice", 1971) or Francesco Rosi's *Ca' d'Oro*, excellent ("Illustrous Corpses", 1975) and *Cristo si ferma a Eboli* ("Christ Stopped at Eboli", 1979) to recognise the extraordinary skill and versatility of De Santis.

Each of these directors prized his ability to adapt setting, and mould light and shadow, to create a particular atmosphere and feeling appropriate to the subject in hand. His work on *Romeo and Juliet*, using much hand-held camera, blending locations with a backlog reconstruction of Verona's piazza in the 15th century, won

him the year's Academy Award for Cinematography.

The much younger brother of the noted director Giuseppe de Santis, Pasqualino gained a job as assistant camera operator on one of his brother's productions after graduating from film school in Rome in 1948. This was the start of a long association with the cinematographer Piero Porta, a man with formidable practical skills who taught him that every problem had a technical solution.

In 1958, De Santis became a camera operator and soon linked up with the director of photography Gianni di Venanzo on such films as Antonioni's *La Notte* (1960), Rosi's *Salvo Giuliano* (1961), Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971) or Francesco Rosi's *Ca' d'Oro*, excellent ("Illustrous Corpses", 1975) and *Cristo si ferma a Eboli* ("Christ Stopped at Eboli", 1979) to recognise the extraordinary skill and versatility of De Santis.

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cinematographer. He provided the serene images of the fairytale *C'era una volta* ("Cinderella - Italian Style", 1967), then adopted magnesium lighting for the First World War trenches of *Uomini contro* ("Men Against", 1970), handling camera and harsh visual for the rapidly paced corruption drama *Il Caso Mattei* ("The Mattei Affair", 1972), and gangster biopic *Lucky Luciano* (1973), and a hard, dry look for *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, with its story of political exile in the mountains, before switching to the luminous brightness of *I tre fratelli* ("Three Brothers", 1980). "He chooses the right light for the right place," said Rosi.

He was Visconti's last regular cameraman, and worked on four of the director's last five films: *La Caduta degli Dei* ("The Damned", 1969), *Death in Venice*, *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* ("Conversation Piece", 1974) and *L'Innocente* ("The Innocent", 1976).

From Di Venanzo, De Santis learned how to overcome difficulties by taking risks and experimenting. He shot part of Rosi's bulging picture *Il Momento della verità* ("The Moment of Truth", 1965) after Di Venanzo left, and completed the Ren Harris comedy *The Honey Pot* (1966, directed by Joseph Mankiewicz) when Di Venanzo died suddenly.

Always wearing around his neck the light fit that had belonged to Di Venanzo, De Santis then became Rosi's regular

cinematographer. He provided the serene images of the fairytale *C'era una volta* ("Cinderella - Italian Style", 1967), then adopted magnesium lighting for the First World War trenches of *Uomini contro* ("Men Against", 1970), handling camera and harsh visual for the rapidly paced corruption drama *Il Caso Mattei* ("The Mattei Affair", 1972), and gangster biopic *Lucky Luciano* (1973), and a hard, dry look for *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, with its story of political exile in the mountains, before switching to the luminous brightness of *I tre fratelli* ("Three Brothers", 1980). "He chooses the right light for the right place," said Rosi.

Less active in recent years, in the late Eighties De Santis rejoined Rosi for another social drama, filmed in exotic locations, *Cronaca di una morte annunciata* ("Chronicle of a Death Foretold", 1987) and, fittingly, he had rejoined Rosi earlier this year on the director's latest venture, *La Tregua* ("The Truce", 1989), based on the book by Primo Levi, and died of a heart attack in the Ukraine while still working on the film.

Allen Eyles

Pasqualino de Santis, cinematographer: born Forlì, Italy 24 April 1927; died Ukraine 23 June 1996.

Bobby Keetch, footballer, died London 29 June, aged 54. Joined Fulham as a defender in 1959 and played briefly for QPR before retirement in 1969. Opened the theme restaurant Football Football in London earlier this year.

Bob (R.J.) O'Ryan, jockey, died Malton, North Yorkshire, aged 79. Won the Champion Hurdle on Distel and the Ritz Club Chase on Dunshaughlin on the same day at Cheltenham in 1946.

Louis Ulrich, mountaineer, died Yakima, Washington 22 June, aged 96. Credited with a number of first ascents in Washington state, including Ulrich's Couloir on Mount Stuart.

George Snell, immunogeneticist, died Bar Harbor, Maine 6 June, aged 92. Awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1980 for his work on genes that control cellular response.

Gray: the problem of Englishness

his devoted partner Annie Carver and a summer of cricket with his stepson Gordon.

Colin MacCabe

Piers Michael Davidson Gray, English scholar born London 26 May 1947; died London 28 June 1996.

## Piers Gray

Piers Gray was one of the most gifted literary critics of his generation. He was also the most witty, erudite and perceptive of companions, someone whose vast learning and hard-won wisdom would as easily illuminate a cricket match as a poem, a social gathering as a philosophical thesis.

His father had alternated work as a pathologist between England and Canada and Gray started his studies in philosophy at Dalhousie University in Canada. Literature, however, was always his passion and F.R. Leavis the model for criticism. To Cambridge then he came and matriculated at Trinity College in 1967, where Theo Redpath was Director of Studies in English. If his early perspective was a classic Leavisism which seemed

anachronistic to fellow students in Cambridge of the late Sixties, this fundamental commitment to the analysis of the individual life expressed in language was soon to be philosophically deepened and historically enriched.

The assiduous undergraduate scholar had been little affected by either the politics or the culture of May 1968, but as a more relaxed graduate student his perspective broadened so that his investigation of T.S. Eliot's early philosophical idealism was informed by deep engagement with Walter Benjamin and the thought of Henri Bergman's meditations on matter and memory that was so vital to both the German thinker and Anglo-American poet.

The matter of his dissertation, supervised by Jeremy Fryne, was made the more evident to Gray after he joined the English department of Hong Kong University at the beginning of 1977.

This unacceptability was

made the more evident to Gray after he joined the English department of Hong Kong University at the beginning of 1977.

The matter of his dissertation, supervised by Jeremy Fryne,

was the central paradox of the

immersion in a department

where both language and

linguistics were taken seriously.

Eliot's Eurocentrism, once dis-

missed as intellectually unten-

able, was now perceived as

politically wicked.

Gray turned to the problem

of how an anti-Semitic Ameri-

cian had come to speak for an

Englishness which discounted the

world. For Gray a major part

of the answer was to be found

in the First World War and the

way in which Gray's own chosen ethnicity had founded in the trenches. His unjustly ne-

glected *Marginal Men* (Macmillan, 1991) examines through the disparate works of Ivor Gurney, Edward Thomas and J.R. Ackroyd the kinds of emotional and

spiritual impasses in which Eng-

lishness all but ended.

The impasses were, unfortu-

nately, all too real for Gray him-

self. The early engagement with

China turned to a sulky hope-

lessness, the pleasures of the

languages and linguistic de-

partment, and in particular the

presence of Roy Harris (who

came from the Oxford chair of

Linguistics), turned to despair

at the grind of teaching English

literature to students for whom

English was a second language.

And so it went, from the

immersion in a department

where both language and

linguistics were taken seriously,

to the disengagement from the

world, the loss of a sense of

belonging and the loss of a

sense of self.

Gray turned to the problem

of how an anti-Semitic Ameri-

cian had come to speak for an

Englishness which discounted the

world. For Gray a major part

of the answer was to be found

in the First World War and the

way in which Gray's own chosen

ethnicity had founded in the

trenches. His unjustly ne-

glected *Marginal Men* (Macmillan, 1991) examines through the

disparate works of Ivor Gurney, Edward Thomas and J.R. Ackroyd the kinds of emotional and

spiritual impasses in which Eng-

lishness all but ended.

</div



# House prices to rocket 10% in 'mini-boom'

**TOM STEVENSON**  
City Editor

House prices in Greater London and the South are set to rise by 10 per cent a year for the next two years as the housing market embarks on a forecast 'mini-boom'.

Rising real incomes, together with building society windfalls, lower taxes and the best affordability for 25 years mean prospects are brighter than at any time since the late 1980s.

The forecasts from Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the German-owned investment bank, chime with the 'golden scenario' expected by Ernst & Young's latest economic model, showing consumer spending growing at its fastest rate for eight years. Spending is forecast to grow at 4 per cent in 1997, up from 2.7

per cent this year. Both Deutsche and Ernst & Young expect the strength of the housing market and high street to lead to a rise in interest rates next year, especially if the Chancellor is tempted to drop the cost of borrowing even lower this year for political reasons.

Paul Droot, chief economist at the Ernst & Young club, an independent economic modeller, warned:

"Interest rates will almost certainly need to rise in 1997 if the UK is to turn the bright short-term outlook into enduring low-inflation growth. Any further interest rate cuts this year will only make these subsequent increases all the more important."

Ernst & Young sees an improving housing market as being an important factor in an

acceleration in the UK economy's growth rate from 2.2 per cent this year to 3.3 per cent in 1997. Falling interest rates, tax cuts and improving export market conditions, as Europe recovers, are expected to revitalise the economic environment over the next 18 months and allow unemployment to fall below 2 million.

Although inflation is expected to fall below the Government's target of 2.5 per cent by early next year and to average around 2.25 per cent during 1997, the anticipated robust consumer recovery could see inflation rising above 4 per cent in 1998. Ernst & Young believes the Government will need to raise interest rates to 7 per cent by the autumn of 1997 to keep a lid on rising prices.

According to Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the signs of housing recovery have been building steadily this year, with the Halifax house price index up 10 per cent on an annualised basis so far this year and mortgage approvals at a seven-year high.

The Halifax index has risen for 10 consecutive months, so that prices in May were 4.6 per cent higher than a year ago. That represents the highest level of house price inflation since October 1989.

Deutsche's report, which is published today, added: "The question now is not so much

whether the recovery can be sustained, more what type of recovery it will be and what chance there is of a return to a housing boom."

Factors acting against a boom similar to those experienced in the early 1970s and late 1980s include changing demographics, cuts in tax breaks such as Miras and a hangover from the sharp fall in house prices in the early 1990s which led to 330,000 homes being repossessed, 650,000 households being unable to keep up with mortgage repayments and 2 million living with mortgage debts higher

than the value of their homes. Despite fewer first-time buyers and greater caution among buyers and lenders, however, the bank still expects prices on average to rise by 6 per cent this year, 8 per cent in 1997 and almost 9 per cent the following year.

The greatest potential for house price growth lies in Greater London and the South, where Deutsche calculates values are lowest compared with their long-term equilibrium level. While houses in the West Midlands are within 5 per cent of the long-run relationship

between prices and incomes, in London they could be as much as 30 per cent undervalued on that measure.

As a result, Deutsche forecasts average price rises in the capital of 11 per cent in both 1997 and 1998 after an 8.5 per cent increase this year. If Deutsche's forecasts are achieved, a house worth £150,000 at the beginning of 1996 will have appreciated to £200,000 by the end of 1998.

The effect of rises of that magnitude would be to almost eliminate negative equity by the end of that year.



**Railtrack contracts to cost 4,000 jobs**

**MICHAEL HARRISON**

More than 4,000 jobs are likely to be shed by rail maintenance companies following the privatisation of the industry and the signing of tough new contracts with Railtrack, it has emerged.

Under the new agreements with Railtrack, owner of the country's track, signalling and stations, the seven former British Rail infrastructure maintenance units are facing a 20 per cent reduction in revenues over the next five years.

The contracts, together with track renewal work, are worth £1bn a year and the area of costs that Railtrack has identified for the biggest savings.

Eddie King of Amey Railways, new owner of BR's former Western maintenance unit covering the Paddington to Penzance line, estimated that it would have to cut its 2,500-strong workforce by about 600 over the next five years.

The six other maintenance companies will have to make similar or even bigger job cuts to improve productivity and offset the reductions in revenues. The Western maintenance unit had already shed 1,600 jobs in the two years leading up to privatisation but some of the other maintenance units are still operating with inflated BR-style staff levels.

Job cuts are also likely among the six former BR track renewal units which have about £200m worth of contracts with Railtrack a year.

Instead of building in annual reductions in the revenues they can earn, Railtrack has agreed that increasing amounts of work can be put out to competitive tender.

## Kingfisher among potential predators eyeing Wickes

**MATHEW HORSMAN**

Leading DIY retailers, including Kingfisher, are taking a close look at troubled Wickes, and might consider bids for the company once the extent of the profit overstatement scam that emerged last week is confirmed. Wickes hopes to report within two weeks.

"Of course we are taking an interest, although it is too early to expect anything dramatic," a source at Kingfisher, which owns the B&Q chain, said yesterday. Despite the problems, "Wickes are quite highly thought of, and are an excellent brand".

Another DIY industry source added: "Wickes would be a welcome addition to many companies in the sector. They have a reasonable market share, and good quality shops."

But Boots, owner of AG Stanley and Do It All, is unlikely to be interested, insiders indicated yesterday. The company has just bought the half of Do It All it did not already own from

WH Smith, and has said it will seek to close as many as 60 shops. It is believed the company is not looking to expand further in the DIY sector.

Auditors are confirming their investigations this week into controversial discount schemes between suppliers and buyers at Wickes, attempting to calculate the amount by which the company's profits have been overstated in the accounts.

Insiders suggested yesterday that the cumulative overstatement since 1990 was likely to equal the company's operating profits of £30.8m in 1995.

The extent of the scam has shocked some industry executives, although one said yesterday that "there had been industry rumours for some time" because of the company's ability to weather even significant downturns in the economy.

The overstatement relates principally to payments made by suppliers to secure contracts with Wickes. Common in the industry, the "golden hello" payments in Wickes' case were

often payable over two or three years, even though the company accounted for them in a single year, thus inflating profits and thereby bonuses for management.

Similarly, suppliers were allowed to increase prices in subsequent years to offset cash payments earmarked for in-store promotions and other marketing schemes.

At the heart of the scam is the apparent connivance of at least

some suppliers. Investigators are also trying to determine who at Wickes was directing the large-scale cover-up needed to keep auditors in the dark year after year. "We are trying to determine who knew, and when they knew it," a source close to the investigation said yesterday.

The inquiry widened late last week to include the former finance director, Trevor Llewellyn, now at building materials company Caradon. Two executives were also suspended last week, although they are helping with the investigation.

Copies of some of the secret agreements were given to Stuart Stradling, the company's current finance director, 10 days ago, prompting last week's dramatic events, including the resignation of Henry Sweetbaum, the group's chairman and chief executive, and a halving of Wickes' share price. By Tuesday, when the shares were suspended, the company was worth just £260m.

Wickes has 108 shops in Britain and 40 on the Continent. The high numbers add weight to the argument that as the number of cards in circulation increases they become less effective. The supermarket groups are under growing pressure to add more and more services and promotions to their schemes to differentiate them.

Sainsbury's launched its Reward scheme on 17 June after chairman David Sainsbury had initially dismissed rivals' versions as nothing more than "electronic Green Shield stamps".

Asda chief executive Archie Norman last week described the mass launch of cards as part of the "culture of sameness" afflicting the industry. He said Asda preferred to offer lower prices on the shelves now.

## Jersey moves to protect accountants

**ROGER TRAPP**

Jersey is expected to pass legislation this week to protect accountants and other professional firms from being wiped out by negligence claims. The move comes amid speculation that the UK government is ready to stem the flight offshore of professionals by introducing its own law.

The measure due to be debated in the States of Jersey legislature tomorrow has been developed with the aid of big six accountancy firms. Price Waterhouse and Ernst & Young, If approved, it will allow

large professional firms registering in the Channel Island to protect the personal assets of partners by becoming limited liability partnerships in much the same way as their US counterparts have done by setting up in the state of Delaware. The Isle of Man and Guernsey are also thought to be planning their own versions of the law.

But the fact that large firms of architects, surveyors and lawyers have expressed interest in following the leading accountants offshore has been developed with the aid of big six accountancy firms. Price Waterhouse and Ernst & Young, If approved, it will allow

the standing of the City of London as a financial centre.

At recent meetings organised by the Cabinet Office between representatives of the large firms – including KPMG, which has responded to the problem by turning its audit arm into a limited company – and government officials it has been indicated that ministers might be prepared to amend the law.

At present, limited liability partnerships are allowed subject to tight restrictions that render them difficult to operate.

The development is encouraging to the accountancy profession, which saw its lengthy

campaign for a change in the law receive a setback earlier this year, when a Law Commission feasibility study commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry concluded that there was no case for reforming the concept of joint and several liability.

Any initiative by the Government – which could come as early as this week – is unlikely to stop the firms' current plans.

One spokesman said the development was "good news", but change could take up to five years to introduce. In that time, a firm could face the "catastrophic claim" they all feared.

**Week ahead: Footsie off the boil**  
**Interview: Orit Gadiel of Bain & Co**

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Sugar serves Betacom an ACE

**TOM STEVENSON**  
City Editor

Amstrad will announce today the injection of its loss-making consumer electronics business into Betacom, the separately quoted telephone equipment distributor it controls. The deal is being seen as a possible precursor to a takeover by Alan Sugar of Betacom, allowing the Amstrad chairman to continue his long involvement with the electronics industry after the planned takeover by Psion of

a company almost as large as itself, is seen as a high-risk strategy for one of the stock market's most successful companies in recent years. David Porter, Psion's chairman, said last week that he viewed the acquisition of Dancall as a key step in maintaining Psion's position in the fast-converging worlds of computing and telecommunications.

Betacom's shares are expected to rise sharply today as investors reflect on the potential to absorb ACE's revenues at little additional cost. Possibly 100 of ACE's 130 staff would not be taken on by Betacom and the reduction in overheads is expected to push ACE back into the black.

That would boost profits at Betacom, which last year made £430,000. In anticipation of some sort of deal, its shares rose 5p to 14.5p last week, valuing the company at just £9.7m.

Buying Betacom would represent fairly small change for Alan Sugar, who will be left with about 17 per cent of the enlarged Psion after any deal is struck between the two companies. At a proposed takeover price of 200p a share, Mr Sugar's stake in Amstrad is valued at around £250m.

So far speculation over his future has centred on Tottenham Hotspur, the Premiership football club he chairs. Analysts believe he harbours ambitions to create a rival, in commercial terms, to Manchester United, valued at more than £250m.



Selling like hot cakes: Analysts expect a substantial rise, particularly in the South

## Revised Interest Rates For Accounts No Longer Open To New Investors.

Amended Investment and Savings Rates. Effective from 1st July, 1996.

Minimum Investment	Gross*	Gross CAR*	Net*
<b>Instant Access Account</b>			
£50,000+	3.40%	—	2.72%
£20,000	3.15%	—	2.52%
£10,000	3.00%	—	2.40%
£5,000	2.50%	—	2.00%
£2,500	2.30%	—	1.84%
£500	2.10%	—	1.68%
£250	0.35%	—	0.28%
£100	0.10%	—	0.08%
<b>Half Yearly Instant Access Account</b>			
£50,000+	3.37%	3.40%	2.70%
£20,000	3.13%	3.15%	2.50%
£10,000	2.93%	3.00%	2.96%
£5,000	2.48%	2.50%	1.98%
£2,500	2.29%	2.30%	1.83%
£500	2.08%	2.10%	1.67%
£250	0.35%	0.35%	0.28%
<b>Monthly Instant Access Account</b>			
£50,000+	3.35%	3.40%	2.68%
£20,000	3.11%	3.15%	2.49%
£10,000	2.96%	3.00%	2.37%
£5,000	2.47%	2.50%	1.98%
£2,500	2.28%	2.30%	1.82%
£1,000	2.08%	2.96%	1.66%
<b>Trident Gross</b>			
£20,000+	4.25%	—	3.40%
£10,000	3.75%	—	3.00%
£5,000	3.25%	—	2.60%
<b>Monthly and Flexi-TESSA (1st issue)</b>			
Monthly-TESSA	5.45% TAX FREE*	—	
Flexi-TESSA	5.25% TAX FREE*	—	

\*Without UK income tax deducted. \*\*Annual return



## SCIENCE

18

The political row over beef seems to be over, but will we ever know if BSE can be passed to humans? New evidence suggests that even if it can, some of us may be immune – but our chances are 50-50. By Charles Arthur

# I CJD: can your genes save you?

**B**efore you read further, take a coin, pick heads or tails, and flip it – but don't look at the result. Your guess was either wrong or right; and that is how likely you are to be immune to the "new variant" of CJD, if it can be caught from eating beef products infected with BSE. And while the coin remains hidden, that is how much you know about your personal status – immune or susceptible.

But don't look at the coin just for the moment. Find out first why it's important. It has been three months since Stephen Dorrell, the health secretary, told the Commons that the best explanation at present for 10 recent cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease was "exposure to BSE before 1989". A great deal of political wrangling over beef bans and culling strategies has followed – in the course of which, the scientific debate has been all but drowned out.

Only one new case of the new variant of CJD (described more simply in the scientific literature as "vCJD") has been confirmed since then, and another identified from samples in France. So can we relax?

Not according to Rob Will, director of the CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh. "It's very difficult to interpret," he said. "We had 12 cases in 24 months – one more since April suggests the same rate as before. It's far too early to predict or have any reassurances about what is going to happen." It will probably be six months before a clear picture emerges, and perhaps five years (because of the disease's long incubation period) before it is clear whether the risk has passed.

But according to a growing body of scientific opinion, our personal susceptibility to CJD lies in our genes, and particularly in the pair of genes that every person (and most of the higher mammals) has which manufacture the PrP protein. This protein is produced widely in the body but, according to recent experiments in which it was "knocked out" in mice, its principal function is to keep nerve cells in the brain functioning.

According to the theory, in BSE, CJD and related forms of the disease in other animals, misshapen versions of the PrP protein – known as "prions" – somehow recruit the normal form into changing shape, creating more prions. Though it takes years, the result is the depo-

sition of insoluble plaques of the misshapen protein in brain cells, leading initially to loss of cell function and finally to the decay and "spongy" appearance of the brain.

Everyone has two copies of the PrP gene in each cell. By chance (more probably, a quirk of evolution), there are two different versions of this gene randomly spread throughout the Caucasian population. The difference occurs at the 129th "codon" of the gene. Each codon is a set of instructions within the gene, and specifies a particular amino acid to be added to the protein being made. In one version of the PrP gene, codon 129 specifies the production of methionine; in the other, it specifies valine. These are known as the "meth" and "val" versions of the PrP gene.

The key to the prion diseases (as BSE and CJD are sometimes known) is shape. Depending on the sequence of amino acids, the protein folds into a particular shape. Substitute one amino acid for another at some point – say, methionine for valine – and you create a differently shaped product.

If you are Caucasian, then because the two versions are randomly spread through the population, there is an equal chance that you have identical copies of the gene. Both copies might be "meth", or both "val". In the standard phrase, you are homozygous for c129. Alternatively, there is a 50 per cent chance that you have one of each PrP gene – that is, you are heterozygous.

And here is the crux – all 12 cases so far identified of vCJD are homozygous for c129 of the PrP gene.

Furthermore, previous research suggests strongly that people who are heterozygous have a very low risk of developing prion diseases.

This fact was highlighted recently by John Collinge, head of the Prion Disease Group at Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, and one of the leading scientists in this field. "We express [produce] the PrP protein [from] both genes," he said. "It seems that if they are different, then the misshapen version of the protein has more trouble in causing the change in shape of the normal ones. It just doesn't seem to happen. But if the PrP genes are the same, then the change can occur much more easily."

Adriano Aguzzi, of the Institute of Neuropathology at the Universi-



Best of British: But for those exposed to BSE from offal products since 1989, escaping CJD may depend on genetic susceptibility

Photograph: David Rose

ty Hospital in Zurich, says the two different original versions of the PrP protein "reduce the efficiency of the conversion [to the misshapen prion form] by reciprocal competition". It may be that one form of the PrP protein does change shape into prions, but that it cannot affect the other form, which retains its function. Both here, the science turns into pure hypothesis, since the prion theory still has some gaps – specifically, in how the infectious prion affects the normal PrP protein.

None of this relies on vCJD being derived from BSE, though the experimental data is beginning to accumulate to suggest that it is. James Ironside of the CJD Surveillance Unit said that recent work, in which

macaque monkeys were injected with BSE and showed brain plaques after three years which strongly resembled vCJD, "strengthens the hypothesis". However, earlier experiments with marmoset monkeys given BSE did not produce vCJD plaques. The problem is that if BSE does not cause vCJD, there is no way to prove it. Science can't prove a negative.

But even so, Collinge and Aguzzi seem to suggest that half of us really have nothing to fear, even if BSE is transmissible to humans – which the scientific evidence suggests with growing insistence. But equally, half of us have a great deal to fear, since CJD is fatal and untreatable, and nobody knows what the lower limit is

for exposure to the disease agent. So, would you like to look at your coin now?

In the real world, of course, looking at the coin to find out whether you are really at risk requires genetic testing – an option which is both slow and expensive. Unsurprisingly, the British Government is taking a more pragmatic (and cheaper) approach than widespread genetic testing of everybody's PrP genes – a measure which would hardly reduce public concern and would probably cost as much again as the planned cattle cull.

A private company has been hired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) to find out just what happened between 1980 and 1989 to all the hits of cows

– the head, brain, spinal cord, spleen and lymph glands – that since 1989 have been declared "Specified Bovine Offals" (SBOs), and banned from human and animal consumption. The medics on SEAC, the specialist committee of scientific advisors to the Government on BSE and CJD, requested the study some months ago, though budgetary limits meant it has only just begun. "The medics on SEAC want to have information about the most likely route of infection, if there was one," explained a MAFF spokeswoman last week. "So the research is looking not just at how SBOs were used in food and pharmaceuticals, but also in paints, tyres and oils."

The worrying thing about the BSE

prion, as Dr Aguzzi puts it, is that "it is highly promiscuous in its choice of hosts. Unlike its counterpart in sheep, mice and hamsters, it appears to infect animals of other species easily, especially when they are dead."

Furthermore, it turns out, the French research on the macaques used only about 50 to 100 milligrams of BSE-infected material for each monkey. "These amounts are well within the range of the amounts present in contaminated food products for human consumption," said a few years ago.

Cause for concern? Certainly. But quite possibly half of us don't have anything to worry about. Would you like to flip your coin again?

## Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the UK

**M**uch more to be compatisatis the si tracts emer... To with count static Brits tecan centr... The track £1bn costs fied f... Ed ways, West ering zance woul stron... over... The comp simili to in offi... eme... nanc... 1,600 leadi... some amts date... Jol the si mits wortl... rack... In... ill... re... he... ype... if w... etit...

Referrals	Deaths of definite & probable causes					
	Sporadic	iatrogenic	Familial	GSS	NVICJD	Total
1985	26	1	1	0	–	28
1986	26	0	0	0	–	26
1987	23	0	0	1	–	24
1988	21	1	1	0	–	23
1989	28	2	1	0	–	31
1990	52*	26	5	0	–	31
1991	75	32	1	3	0	36
1992	96	44	2	4	1	51
1993	78	37	4	2	2	45
1994	115	53	1	2	3	59
1995	79	33	4	1	2	43
1996	46	12	0	0	1	19
end May						

\* The CJD Surveillance Unit was set up by the Department of Health and the Scottish Home and Health Department in May 1990. Source: Department of Health

inherited disease also associated with PrP mutation.

The CJD Unit is convinced vCJD is a new phenomenon. One non-UK case has been discovered –

retrospectively – in Lyons, bringing the total number of definite vCJD cases recorded to 12. The possibility that more might be out there is occupying many medics' time.

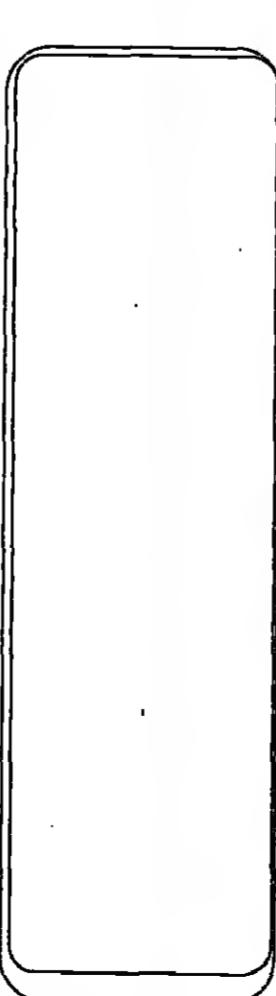


**ACROSS**

- 1 He knocks the lot down (10)
- 8 Isn't easy getting out (3,4)
- 9 Fall to meet Greek leader before take off (4)
- 10 Girl's promotion a number accepted (6)
- 11 Finished with spoken poem (8)
- 13 Expert's able to return (6)
- 14 Manage to leave (3,5)
- 15 One isn't crazy about a foreigner (8)
- 19 Go for very musical pupil (6)
- 21 Raised points with VIP in front (8)
- 23 Sculptor's hill is sent back by star (5)
- 25 Hear dog's greeting (4)
- 16 Manage to leave (3,5)
- 17 One isn't crazy about a foreigner (8)
- 19 Go for very musical pupil (6)
- 21 Raised points with VIP in front (8)
- 23 Sculptor's hill is sent back by star (5)
- 24 Expect delay (4)

**DOWN**

- 1 Notice a strain say (9)
- 2 Catch nothing in pen (4)
- 3 Does again object to key charges (8)
- 4 Approaching time of darkness (5)
- 5 Seaport's rough grass (7)
- 6 Fashionable swimsuit emerges undamaged (2,3,5)
- 7 Workshop boss I round on (6)
- 12 Bird-brained lawyer? (5,5)
- 15 Sober person smashed in bar-seat (9)
- 16 Volume of drink I can shift in Spain (8)
- 18 Port has more of a bite to it (7)
- 20 Jacket in tan or a khaki shade (6)
- 22 Prize idiot? (5)
- 24 Expect delay (4)



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